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ATARI VS. MYSTIQUE

V. DI FATE '83

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Vanguard is here with everything it has in the arcade. And it's only from Atari.

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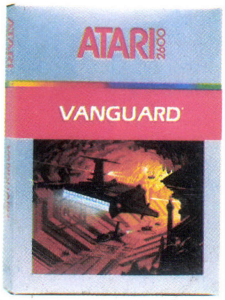
Run out of lives and the game's not over. Continue, but only after you've forfeited your points.

And points can be hard to come by. Which may be the most important reason to find out which player in the example pictured above is making the mistake. The player on the left has destroyed a Kemlus snake in Rainbow Zone Three for 100 points. But the player on the right didn't make that mistake. He's docked with a Kemlus snake and is racking up over 1000 points.



So don't leave Vanguard in the store. It would be the biggest mistake of all.

ATARI®

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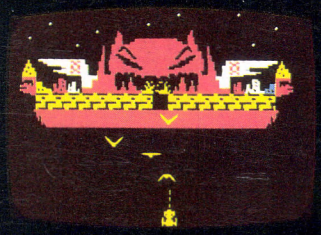
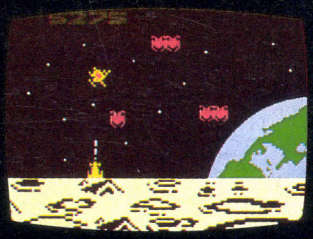

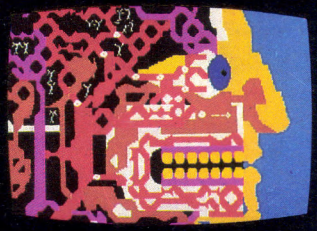
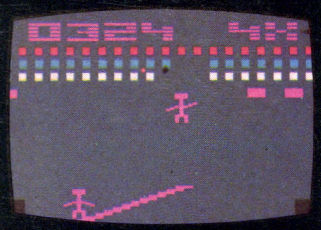
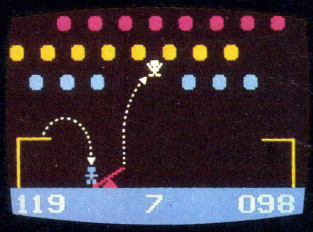

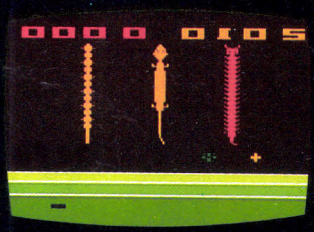
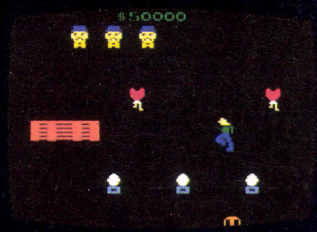
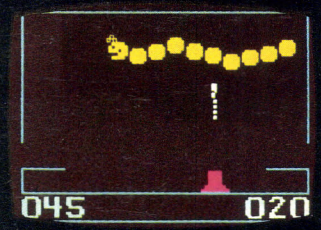

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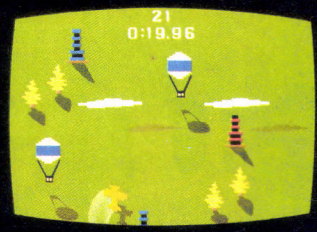

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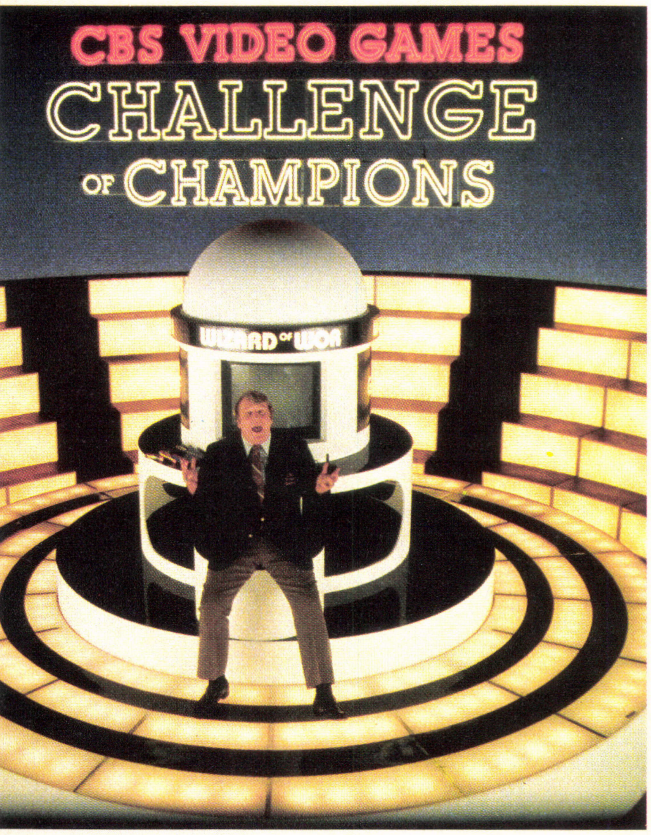
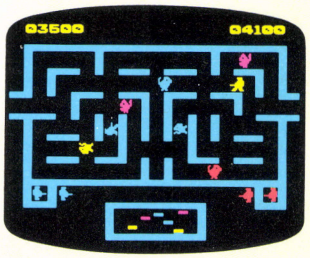
Winning at 'Wizard of Wor' and 'Gorf'. By John Madden.



In our first Challenge of Champions, Ray Johnson of Los Angeles defeated Tony Sarkis of New York and David Hayes, a student at Cal Tech, defeated Brian Anderson, a student at MIT.

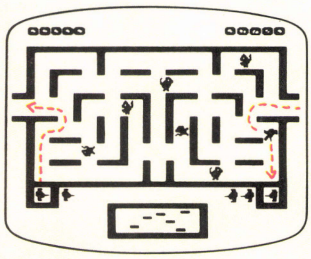
As the sportscaster for CBS Video Games, I get a chance to watch some of the best players in the country in the "Challenge of Champions."

Here's some of their winning strategies.



Wizard of Wor™: You start with three worriors. The object of this game is to defeat the Wizard, his henchmen and your opponent. This is a game you can play alone, or two can play simultaneously. When two play, you have to worry about getting zapped by your opponent as well as the Wizard, and his gang.

Here's an interesting move you might want to try. Get out into the maze fast, zip out of the escape door, come back in through the opposite side. If you're quick enough, you'll be in perfect position to blitz your opponent's three worriors before they can score any points. The ultimate shutout.

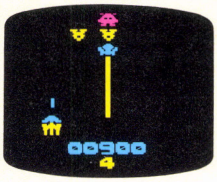


Another variation is to work together. Make a pact not to hit each other (accidents do happen, of course) and go for the record score: 99,500 by Frank Merollo (10/82) and Buz Pryzby (8/82).

'These are two tough games, but I know you're up to the challenge.'

Gorf™ is four boards in one game. Your father will enjoy this game because with a little luck, he'll be able to go through the four boards

Coaching tips: patience



Stick & move

Get position

Hit it high

a couple of times, but after the third level it starts to get faster...and faster. That's when you separate the players from the parents. You start out aggressively and after 10,000 points the bombs and torpedoes start to come hot and heavy, so be prepared to change to a defensive game plan.

The record high score is still 32,700 by Horace Eckerstrom (9/82), which gives you some idea of how hard this game is.

Both Wizard of Wor and Gorf are really tough, but I know you're up to the challenge.

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CBS Video Games

Are you up to the challenge?

VIDEOGAMING ILLUSTRATED

April 1983

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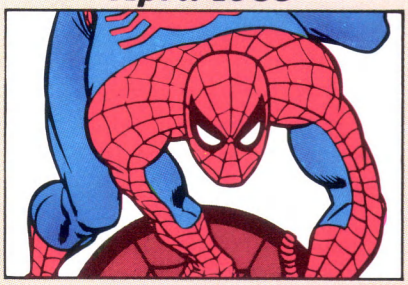

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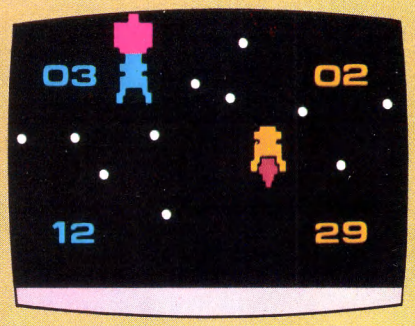
THE COVER

Two characters who would otherwise never meet join forces: Tron, the master program personified from the Disney movie of the same name, and Spiderman, the fallible superhero created by Stan Lee. Two of the best videogames currently in release are based on these two champions of order and justice. The painting is the work of Vincent DiFate, who dazzled our readers with his previous cover painting of Darth Vader.

The Keyboard



Games like Odyssey's **Out of This World** *and Atari's 5200* **Defender** *have their roots in real-life space adventure.*

a guest editorial by Ben Bova

NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Agency, will be twenty-five years old on October 1, 1983. I am hard pressed to think of a government (or private) agency that has accomplished so much for each and every one of us.

Many of you reading this are too young to remember Sputnik. When the Russians put up the world's first artificial satellite, October 4, 1957, I was working on the Vanguard project, and we had thought that *we* would launch the first satellite. Oh, we knew that the Russians had bigger rocket boosters and that they had announced their intention to launch satellites. And we knew better than anyone else how frail the whole Vanguard operation was; it really ran on a shoestring.

But knowing and believing are two different things. We were just as shocked as anyone else when Sputnik went into orbit. More so, really. We couldn't escape the feeling that we had somehow failed.

Washington created the civilian space agency within a few months, and it officially came into being on October 1, 1958.

America played catch-up ball for just about ten years, but once President Kennedy established the clear goal of reaching the Moon, the U.S. space program moved steadily ahead. We reached the Moon in 1969. We sent robot spacecraft to land on Mars and cruise past Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn. Even now, Voyager II is on its way toward Uranus, nearly two billion miles away.

And, as a side effect, a *spinoff*, you and I got the whole microchip revolution — including the videogames on which we have collectively spent nearly ten billion dollars in just this past year alone.

Space technology has been the cutting edge of our national industrial might since those days back in the 1960s. The gadgets we were forced to develop to get astronauts to the Moon and back have created the modern electronics industry, home computers, videogames, artificial limbs and organs, medical sensors which watch over patients in intensive care wards, and thousands of other devices and products that are commonplace today, but were little more than science fiction before we got serious about space.

In today's sluggish economy, the electronics industry is one of the few bright spots. America sells tens of *billions* of dollars worth of those computers, videogames, calculators, multi-function wristwatches and other microminiaturized electronic products all around the world each year. The jobs and profits from this new, space-generated industry have already repaid the money invested in Apollo and the rest of the space program.

But these are invisible payoffs, as far as the average citizen is concerned. We accept these marvels so quickly that yesterday's miracle becomes today's commonplace. There is little connection in the public's mind between our nation's vigorous electronic industry and the space technology that spawned that industry.

Yet, if we had not gone to the Moon in the 1960s we would have none of these electronic wonders. And there would be another ten million Americans unemployed. Our economy would be a total shambles.

That is why it is so vitally important to keep pushing forward in space technology. Sure, it's magnificent to explore the universe and it's worthwhile to develop new capabilities. Some of us will even get to ride on the Space Shuttle before another few years are up.

But the important thing is that space technology makes our economy stronger. That means jobs, careers, for all of us. It means marvels to come that will make today's videogames seem as pale as Parcheesi.

(The flight simulators mentioned in this issue's interview with astronaut John Lounge are just a *hint* at what's to come.)

Sadly, perhaps tragically, today, as it nears its 25th birthday, NASA does not have a strong, well-marked-out goal on which to focus its efforts. NASA has created the Space Shuttle, and it's a great success. But space enthusiasts insist that we should be building more than merely four Shuttles, and that NASA should be erecting a permanent space station, a place where scientists and industrial researchers can work for months at a time in orbit. The Reagan White House has approved neither of these programs.

If the videogames and other electronic marvels of today are the result of the space program of the 1960s, then what will produce the new marvels of tomorrow if we fail to keep our space technology strong? Will we be forced to buy our supercomputers and holographic videogames from Japan? Will we be rich enough to afford to buy them?

Happy 25th birthday, NASA. May the next quarter-century be as productive as the past one, and more so. Otherwise, it's back to Parcheesi.

And unemployment.

Ben Bova

Ben Bova is the Editor Emeritus of* Omni Magazine, *and the author of over fifty books of science and science fiction.

eye on

ON THE MARCH

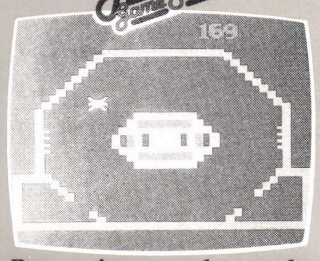
Parker Brothers isn't exactly resting on its laurels.

Encouraged by the combined sale of three million units of *Frogger* (accounting for two-thirds of that total) and *The Empire Strikes Back,* and consumer acceptance of *Spider-man, Amidar,* and the recently released *Jedi Arena* and *Super Cobra,* the company is looking, in the words of a spokesperson, to "carve out a leadership role in home entertainment videogames."

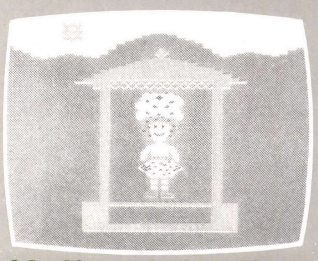
They certainly have the clout to achieve that goal. A total of sixteen new games are going to be released this year, among them the following:

Tutankham: this Atari-compatible version of the Konami arcade attraction sends players through King Tut's tomb in search of keys which will unlock vaults ... chambers rumored to contain treasure as well as devious evil spirits which can only be repelled with a laser gun. For release this month.

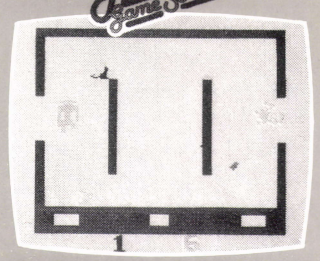
Reactor: the Gottlieb arcade game, coming this month, is one in which players enter a nuclear reactor and fling subatomic particles at the control rods in an effort to shrink the core and prevent a meltdown. For the Atari 2600.



***Preventing a nuclear meltdown and an ensuing radioactive holocaust is the object of Parker Brothers' adaptation of* Reactor.**



***Ms. Shortcake herself, one of five characters in the upcoming children's videogame* Strawberry Shortcake Musical Match-ups.**



***An ape, left, holds a rabbit, cat, and duck captive while the flyer, right, tries to rescue them in* Sky Skipper.**

Sky Skipper: another Atari-compatible release for this month, based on Nintendo's pre-*Donkey Kong* arcade hit. Players limn the roles of pilots, who drop bombs upon bands of giant gorillas; while the apes are stunned, the player must swoop down and rescue captive rabbits, kittens, turtles, and ducks.

Strawberry Shortcake Musical Match-ups: this is the first videogame designed expressly for young girls, ages four through eight. Seems as if the evil Purple Pieman has scrambled the bodies of four denizens of Strawberryland. The player must rebuild Strawberry Shortcake, Lime Chiffon, Blueberry Muffin, and Huckleberry Pie from the assortment of arms, legs, heads, and torsos Mr. Pieman has left behind. When the reconstruction is finished, the little ladies put on a mini-concert.

If the bodies are mismatched, there will not be a concert but a disharmonious series of sounds.

The Atari 2600 version will be out later this month, with editions for Intellivision and the Atari 5200 being readied for the fall.

The Incredible Hulk: this Marvel comics character is discussed in our section on Conquering *Spider-man.*

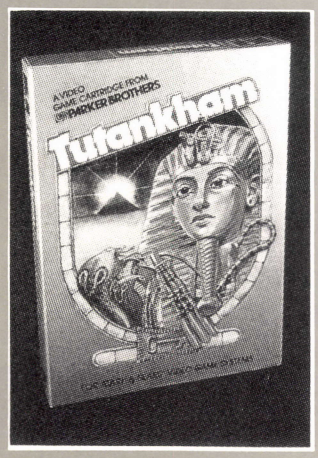
James Bond Agent 007: no more is known about this game than when *Videogaming Illustrated* first announced it in June of last year. The designers are still toying with scenarios, but will have the Atari-compatible game ready for July, coinciding with the simultaneous release of the Roger Moore Bond opus *Octopussy* and Sean Connery's return to the fold in *Never Say Never Again.*

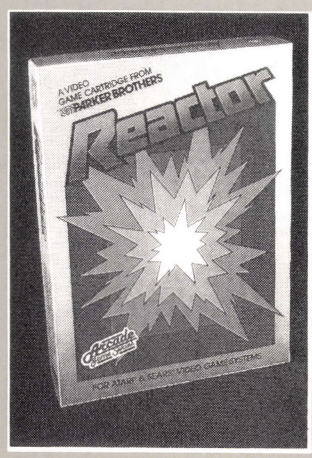
Lord of the Rings: based on Tolkien's characters, this videogame challenges players to transport the elf-like Frodo from his home in the Shire to a treasure located in Moria. Along the way, he is menaced by the deadly Black Riders (pictured on the package). The 2600-compatible game will be available in September, the Intellivision game in November.

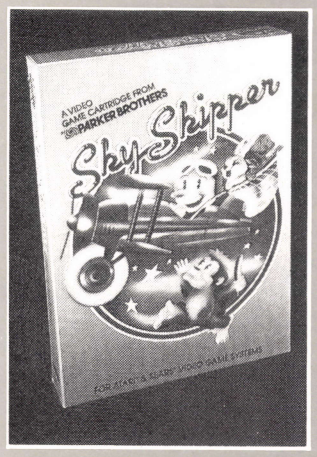
In addition to the videogames, Parker Brothers is taking an ambitious step into computergames.

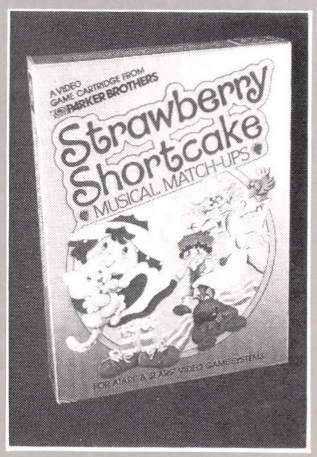
"We have been in the home entertainment business for the past one hundred years," said the company's Douglas Bate. "Computergames," he said confidently, "are the *next* generation."

Starting in June, Parker Brothers will be releasing





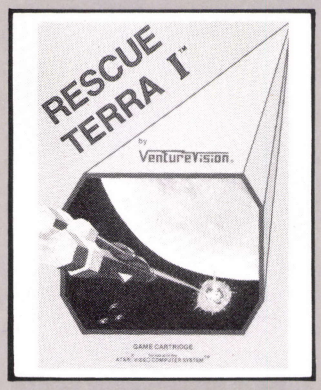




cartridges for use with the Atari 400 and 800, as well as with Commodore and Texas Instrument computers. IBM and Apple discs are likely to follow at the end of the year.

Among the games they will be transforming for computer use are *Frogger* and *Risk*. The latter has been one of the company's best sellers for some twenty years, a board game in which players try to conquer the world.

Parker Brothers has the know-how and the money to make themselves a formidable presence in the field. Yet, almost as exciting as *their* plans are what the other companies are planning to do to meet the competition.



QUITE A VENTURE

Small videogame companies are taking it on the chin. Astrocade is virtually extinct, and Apollo's rise from the ashes of bankruptcy does not seem to be holding.

Yet, in November, Robert Hesler of Grand Prairie, TX, started up a new videogame company called VentureVision. Hesler owned an Atari 2600, and founded his company with a starry-eyed, "If they can do it, I can do it."

Using some of Apollo's ex-employees — a programmer and sales personnel — he put together his first release, *Rescue Terra I* and released it in December. The purpose of the game was to navigate meteor storms, destroy space pirates, battle robots and force fields, and reach the planet Terra 1.

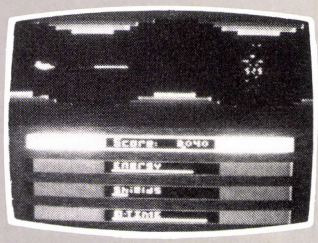
The game sold well at a modest $19.95, and Hesler now plans eight releases for this year.

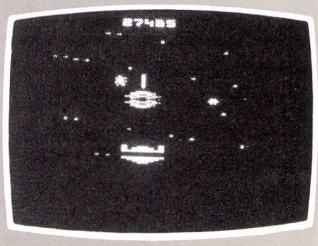
The first of these will go onsale in April: they're entitled *Inner Space* and *Solar Defense*. Both are sequels to *Rescue Terra 1*.

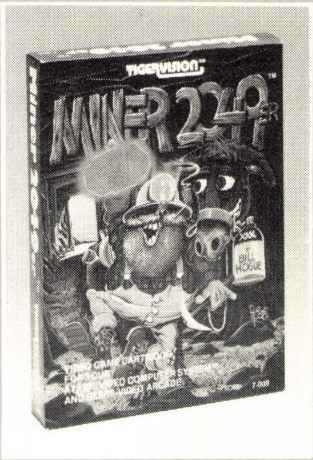
Inner Space is an adventure inside Terra 1. The player fights various enemies on the way to the planet's core, where he or she must destroy the computer which governs the world.

Solar Defense is spacebound, the player operating a space station in earth orbit. The station is situated in the center of the screen, where it is beleaguered by various projectiles coming at it from 360 degrees. The station is visited every now and then by a cargo ship from Terra 1, a vessel which contains energizing Zenbar Crystals mined on the planet.

Two more VentureVision games will be unveiled in June, another two in September, and the final pair in November.







PUT A TIGER IN YOUR 2600

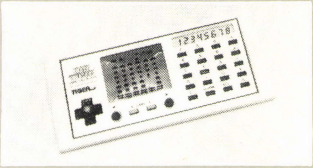
In the meantime, undaunted by the glut of new games, Tigervision intends to claw away at a greater share of the 2600 market with more than just *King Kong, Jawbreaker, Marauder,* and *Threshold*. They've got some new videogames for your Atari VCS, as well as some exciting hand-held products.

On the VCS front, in addition to the recently released *River Patrol* and *Springer*, there are:

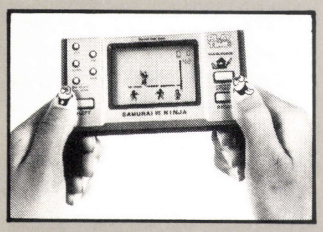
Miner 2049er: Bounty Bob is mining radioactive ore in the year 2049. His first task is to collect various articles left by previous adventurers, such as a pick, helmet, shoe, etc., while jumping over or slaying the deadly mutant organisms which pass by. After Bob has successfully staked a claim in one mine, he can move on to the next. Adding to play value is the fact that each of the mines has different trappings, including transporters, slides, and cannon. Coming next month.

Polaris: You're a submarine commander trying to destroy enemy subs and aircraft while avoiding collision with depth charges, undersea channels, and the ocean floor. An April release.

Intuition : This is not a game but a means of exercising the left side of the brain — the part which researchers tell us we barely use. Briefly, the cartridge uses scientifically created, semi-abstract designs to stimulate reactions in the user and break down the innate resistance we have to using that part of the brain. Details were unavailable at press-time, but Tigervision president Randy Rissman assured us, "This is like no cartridge on the market." For March.



Tiger Electronics has also given us the *Space Invaders* calculator, part of their "Hand Arcade" series. The liquid crystal display offers multi-colored background graphics for the game mode. The 7½ x 2½ unit is controlled by button, as in the original arcade attraction. There are a variety of game variations, skill levels, and single/multi player modes — and if you want to add your accrued scores, the calculator offers an eight digit display along with other useful functions.



WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT

AudioSource, Inc., one of the largest manufacturers of home stereo equipment, has entered the videogame market. For the moment, they're sticking with hand-held games, but the company insists that, if sales warrant, they will be branching out.

At present, two of their "Thumb Power" games are on the market: *Samurai vs. Ninja* and *Jungle Adventure/Woodman.* The company will be releasing *Pipeline, Grassland, Kitchen, Under Construction, Space Station,* and *Fish Catching* over the next few months.

All of these battery-powered games double as digital clocks with alarms.

Though the hand-held medium as a whole is plagued by jerky animation and limited detailing, "Thumb Power" at least offers original themes and diverting gameplay.

The games retail for from $29.95 to $42.95 each, moronic thumb designs not included.

STOP! BUCK'S HERE

There are plenty of home videogames vying for consumer dollars and we'll introduce you to a few more of those cartridges in a minute. But while the software peddlers have been busy, the arcade manufacturers have not exactly been idle — witness Sega, which has plenty of new releases to tempt your pocket book.

The big news, of course, is *Super Zaxxon,* which in a few short weeks has already captured a large share of the market. The look and feel are the same as in *Zaxxon:* the slanted, three-dimensional vista; the altimeter; and the sturdy, stylish joystick.

However, the dangers are far more challenging. After surviving missiles, rotating gun turrets, parabolic antennae, and maser barriers, the player enters a tunnel where the limited ceiling, mines, robot ships and other vessels await — not to mention the fire breathing dragon.

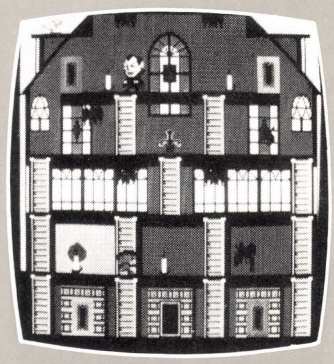
The dragon's a pip: it can only be slain by six hits in its mouth, whereas the player's ship is obliterated by a single puff of fire.

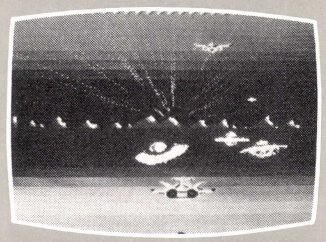
Sega has also begun to score some impressive grosses with *Monster Bash,* in which the player — limning a young boy named Little Red — moves up and down staircases, in and out of Warp Doors, and through various secret passageways while hunting for Dracula, Frankenstein, Bats, Wolfmen and, in a climactic showdown, the lethal-tongued, color-changing Chameleon Man and his army of Spiders.

Scoring a triple play, Sega has crossed *Zaxxon* with *Defender* and come up with a new game based on a popular old hero: *Buck Rogers: Planet of Zoom.* Here, amidst breathtaking graphics, the player must first navigate Buck's ship through heavily armed channels and the Smasher Tunnel — which has walls appearing one after another, each with a hole just large enough for Buck's vessel to enter.

Surviving these perils, Buck must battle waves of Zoom Saucers, space mines, and swirling Robot Zoom-Ships, not to mention Locust Fighters and Spidey Jumpers.

From moldy Transylvania to the towering spires of alien cities, Sega has the realm of fantasy covered.





At right, the new Sega* Buck Rogers *arcade game. Sega's graphics for Buck Rogers (lower left) and Monster Bash, are among the most impressive of the videogames.

A videogame company turns to robotics with the remarkable Sega Chan.

SEGA CHAN

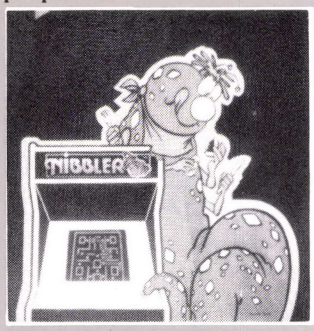
As if making smash arcade games were not enough, Sega recently unveiled their latest creation: Sega Chan, a gleaming, futuristic robot. It is available to appear in arcades, shopping malls, and other sites where consumer attention is required.

Utilizing the latest in microcomputer technology, Sega Chan responds verbally to certain questions when asked, thanks to a unique voice recognition device. The robot's eyes and mouth light up when it speaks.

Additional features of the robot include a built-in video-cassette player and video display screen for playing taped messages; two speakers for sound (one for the video machine, the other for voice), a multi-purpose tray for serving foot, drinks, etc.

Sega Chan stands nearly five feet tall and can raise his head over seven inches for additional height. (Yes, the robot was programmed to do this before *E.T.* hit the screens.) The automaton can also move its head fifteen degrees to the left and right.

What else can this mechanical marvel do, you ask? Well, Sega Chan can move forward and backward and can turn a 360 degree circle in either direction, making it easy to operate in small places. It can also open two mechanical arms to a forty-five degree angle. These arms may be adapted to a variety of functions and are interchangeable to suit different purposes.



A rock-ola artist's interpretation of the Nibbler screen.

DIFFERENT TASTES?

Getting back to videogames — albeit with some reluctance; technological reality *can* be fun — if science fiction and the supernatural games aren't for you, then Rock-Ola has an attraction which should please you, a humorous maze game called *Nibbler.*

Nibbler consists of thirty-two mazes which features the titular character gobbling up bonus objects as it moves through the maze. The catch: Nibbler gets longer as it eats. The player must avoid having Nibbler run into its own lengthening body, at the same time eating all the objects before time runs out. These challenges are made doubly difficult by the fact that the game speeds up as it progresses.

Nibbler has hit the market.

WHERE WERE WE?

Back at the home videogaming ranch, Atari has enough to keep you busy for — well, for the next four months, to be precise.

For your 2600, you can look forward to the following:

MARCH:

Atari *Video Cube,* which is described as a twist-and-turn-the-cube game, ala Rubik, for TV. It's similar to the Radio Shack *Color Cubes Pak* pictured in our last issue.

Centipede, in which the arcade game finally becomes available for the 2600. You will note elsewhere in this issue that it's cousin, *Centipede* for the 5200, was a big winner in our magazine's first annual Vista Awards. (*Centipede* buffs will also be happy to hear that, even as you read these words, Atari's arcade sequel *Millipede* is starting to set new records at your local game room.)

APRIL:

Galaxian, too, warps from the arcade to the 2600, having been available for several months now in its 5600 edition. (*Galactic Invasion,* an Astrocade version for *its* fading home unit, has been available for nearly eighteen months. It was licensed to Astrocade as part of a complicated agreement explained in our February issue.)

Dukes of Hazzard makes the jump from CBS to VCS — and we *do* mean "jump," since the object of the game is to move that famous TV car under, over, and through various objects.

Yet two more arcade games head for home this month: *Crazy Climber,* in which you've got to get a lone figure to the top of a skyscraper using only open windows, and Atari's own arcade smash *Kangaroo.*

Finally, there are three RealSports cartridges coming your way in April: *Soccer, Tennis,* and *Basketball.* The latter is different from Atari's previous — and we thought pretty good — cartridge in that there's a team playing rather than just a one-on-one game.

MAY:

Now that you're through *that* seven-cartridge month — not counting the 5200 releases, detailed below — you get a respite. There are only three games this month.

The first of them is the home version of Taito's *Jungle Hunt.* This is, of course, the *reworked* safari game which is now at your local arcade, and not the *Jungle King* version enjoined by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., for allegedly infringing on their Tarzan character.

The other two games are the first of a proposed series of Sesame Street games for kids: *Cookie Monster Munch* and *Grover's Music Maker.*

JUNE:

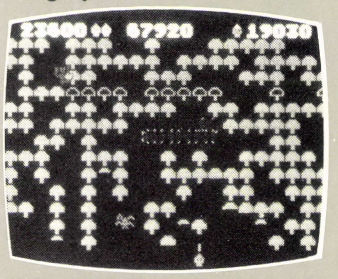
Atari's first shipment this month features the third game of their epic *SwordQuest* series, the monumental *WaterWorld.* It joins *EarthWorld* and *FireWorld,* already on the market, and will be followed in September by *AirWorld,* the last of the series. (Details of the entire saga and the extraordinary contest tied to their playing can be found in our last issue.)

Finally, Atari marks the mid-year by giving us the home version of its wonderful arcade game *Dig-Dug.*

Now then, if you're a 5200 owner here's what *you* have to look forward to over the next four months.

MARCH:

Qix is coming to the home. That means if you don't own a 5200, you're going to want to rush right out and purchase one because *this* game is a marvel. A sure-fire competitor for top-prize in next year's Vista "Best Arcade Adaptation" category.



The 5200 version of* Centipede, *one of the many new Atari games coming your way.

APRIL:

This is as busy a month for the 5200 as it is for the 2600, especially if you're a sports fan.

Four of the five games are athletically inclined. We think the most promising of these is *Pole Position,* a race-car game based on Atari's arcade hit and a sure-bet to give ColecoVision's pricey *Turbo* a run for buyer affection.

Baseball, Basketball, and *Tennis* round out the sports offerings, each extremely detailed and true-to-life as befits the 5200's extensive memory.

The last remaining game in April is *Vanguard,* based on the arcade standard.

MAY:

Although Atari suffered some embarrassment when their 2600 version of *E.T.* failed to sell during last Christmas — after paying a reported twenty-two million dollars for the rights to the game — they're trying again

Continued on page 75

The Law of the Videogaming Jungle

A prominent, Hollywood-based entertainment lawyer examines the legal controversies which plague videogaming — matters that are costing their manufacturers millions.

By Steve Burkow, Esq.

In recent months, the battleground in the highly competitive videogame field has shifted from the stores to the courts. Everywhere you turn, someone is hurling allegations at someone else.

Atari is suing Coleco for alleged patent infringement on their expansion module, and Coleco has accused Atari, in the courts, of trying to monopolize the videogame industry.

Atari is simultaneously doing battle with Imagic over alleged similarities between *Demon Attack* and *Phoenix*, while *Donkey Kong* and its maker Nintendo have their paws full with a legal challenge from King Kong and Universal Pictures.

In previous issues, you read how Tarzan and *Jungle King*, *Pac-Man* and *K.C. Munchkin*, *Jaws* and *Lochjaw*, and numerous other games have all been involved in legal slugfests.

Why is it that everyone's so litigious?

For the most part, videogame companies are all fighting to hold on to what they deem as their share of the market. This is accomplished by challenging a game which seems inordinately derivative, whether it's *K.C. Munchkin* or one of the numerous "knock-off" games which flood the country, the *Congorillas* and their ilk.

At the same time, a lawsuit in the court can be worth two in the bush: these cases often tend to discourage *fresh* competition. A small company thinking of entering the field with a cartridge which *might* be similar to an existing game is going to think twice if it may involve doing battle with a giant. Even if a case is without legal merit, the cost of fighting it can run a *minimum* of twenty or thirty thousand dollars — if you're lucky.

The arcade game* Jungle King *became* Jungle Hunt *after Tarzan took it to court.

But there are matters beyond this matter of competition which the law is now addressing in the videogame field.

Of all the legal cases currently making their way through the courts, perhaps the most interesting are those involving American Multiple Industries, Inc., a manufacturer of so-called "X-rated" videogames.

Most of the controversy focuses on one of the company's games, *Custer's Revenge*, where players are given points for successfully "joining" female figures represented by Indian maidens with a pants-less male figure identified as General Custer.

On a purely societal level, this cartridge has angered, among others, Indians and women's groups. They claim that the game is degrading, though the cartridge seems to be selling quite well in spite of (or because of) the bad publicity.

On the legal front, American Multiple also has its hands full with Atari. Because the new company's games are compatible with the 2600 hardware, Atari is concerned the public will somehow draw the conclusion that Atari's products are not suitable for family use.

(It will be interesting to see if Coleco joins the fray, since *Custer's Revenge* also plays on their expansion module.)

Nor is Atari alone in their concerns. Similar arguments have been leveled against American Multiple by some civic organizations. These groups argue that they have the right to restrict the commerce of businesses which they feel harm the public interest.

Not surprisingly, American Multiple has cried "foul," stating that any attempt to prohibit sale of the cartridge constitutes an abridgement of their First Ammendment right to freedom of expression. In an effort to protect this freedom, late last year American Multiple filed an eleven million dollar action against Suffolk County in Long Island and one of the country's elected officials charging that the county and the official were unconstitutionally moving to prohibit sales of game cartridges.

Thusfar, there has been no formal response from Suffolk County or the individual named, though officials previously stated that American Multiple's right to freedom of expression is outweighed by the county's right to take whatever action is necessary since the company's business constitutes, in their mind, a danger to the health and safety of local citizens.

The courts have not yet dealt with this issue. The closest they have come to controversies of this type has been in the area of adult bookstores. The Supreme Court has held, essentially, that municipalities have the power to zone such enterprises out of existence. They do this by designating a certain area as the only one in which proprietors of adult wares can do business. If such zones are in the most undesirable part of town (which invariably they are), this imposes a significant hardship on that type of business.

The case of American Multiple is considerably different, however, in that "legitimate" videogame shops are selling their software. Hence, the problem is not merely one of rezoning.

At this point, it is impossible to predict which side will prevail. American Multiple's best argument might be that its games are no different from adult-oriented video cassettes of films such as *Deep Throat,* which are also dispensed at these outlets. Communities have thusfar been unable to stop the sale of such material.

Yet, the problems faced by American Multiple are only the tip of the iceberg as far as videogames and the law are concerned.

Here's another facet altogether.

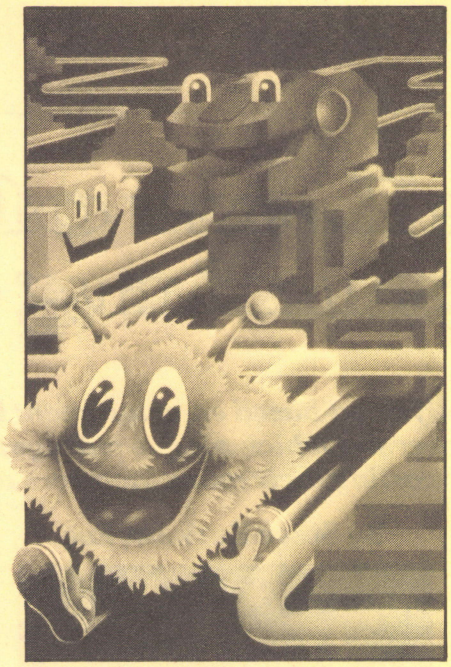
Suppose you're the next great computer programming wizard, someone like the ambitious Flynn in *Tron.* Suppose you've come up with a software program worth millions. How do you prevent yourself from being ripped off if you bring your brainchild to a manufacturer?

This may not matter to you today, but next week you might be sitting at your Atari 800 and come up with a game program which you simply *must* try to get produced. ...

The primary avenues of protection are copyright and patent law.

The Copyright Act of 1976 was specifically ammended to include computer programs. Thus, under copyright law, the software — that is, the program or game as opposed to the physical disk or cartridge itself — can be protected.

The author, in this case the individual who develops a particular software program, is immediately and automatically entitled to copyright protection once the concept is on a disk, or at least committed to paper. If he or she does all the paperwork required, giving the public notice that he or she owns the program, the copyright is



K.C.'s Krazy Chase ***is the successor to the much-lauded*** **K.C. Munchkin,** ***which was ordered off the market when*** **Pac-Man** ***took it to court and won. Odyssey dropped the case in the lap of the Supreme Court. Unfortunately, that august body has refused to hear the case.***

eminently enforceable.

The drawback with copyright is that it doesn't cover a novel piece of hardware, such as a revolutionary joystick or console. For relief in this area, you must look into patent law.

Patent law is designed to protect a new or useful process. In other words, the element of "novelty" must be present for protection. Mere ideas, scientific discoveries, and formulae are not patentable. Anyone can use them. Software programs which rely on mathematical formulae, then, don't automatically qualify for patent protection.

A patent protects an inventor against other individuals who independently but later in time, develop a similar work. If they do, they're out of luck: patents are handed out on a first come, first served basis. The essence of patent protection is to encourage and reward inventors.

Hardware and software are thus pretty well covered by patents and copyrights, respectively. But there's a catch.

If you haven't filed all the appropriate documents and adhered strictly to the process of recording your work, it's terribly difficult to prove that you came up with an idea which you feel someone else has appropriated. In short, an inventor can't really enjoy this full protection until there's something to protect. It's easier, for example, for an author to enforce a copyright on a book that's in-print rather than to enjoin a work which is similar to a manuscript tucked in a drawer. The copyright may be no less valid on the manuscript — but go and prove beyond a doubt when the manuscript was written.

In other words, it's easier to protect something once it's been produced.

How, then, to get something into production while guaranteeing that the idea won't be stolen? That's where the doctrine of trade secrecy comes in handy.

This doctrine protects the individual who has elected to disclose an idea to other parties in order to develop the game or equipment. Secrecy is legally accomplished through written, contractual agreements where all individuals with whom the programmer — or writer or engineer — has contact agree to adhere to a non-disclosure pact.

Many experts suggest that the most prudent course to follow is to adhere to trade secrecy until you're out in the marketplace, at which time it's no longer a secret and copyright can take over.

These are just a few of the legal wrinkles which affect videogames and computers. I'll be stopping by the "Eye On" section every issue or so with brief overviews on the latest in videogame law and legal battles.

Two of the three cartridges produced by American Multiple Industries. The third game, about General Custer and a captive Indian maiden, was recently taken off the market under pressure.

close up

Computers in Orbit

Computer technology is helping to build our future in outer space

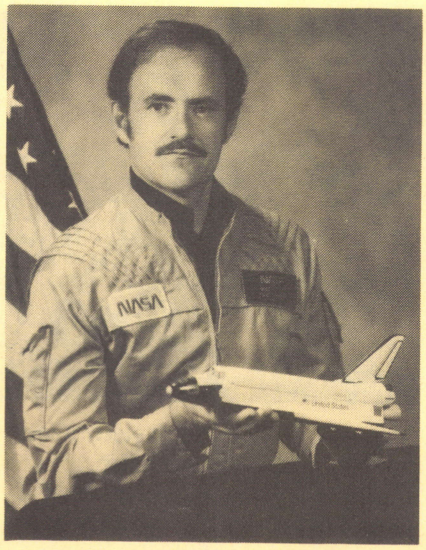
"My life's ambition" says John Michael Lounge, "is to be a construction worker."

A worthy goal, certainly, but consider: Mike Lounge was one of nineteen people (of eight thousand who applied) selected for the astronaut program in 1980. Lounge holds six Navy Air Medals, three Navy Commendation Medals, and the JSC Superior Achievement Award. He has a bachelor of science degree in Physics and Mathematics, and a Masters in Astrogeophysics. He is scheduled to fly into space on either the space shuttle Columbia or Challenger for a mission early this year.

Lounge is referring to NASA's goal of building a permanent, manned space station in orbit around the earth, and of his own hopes to be one of its construction engineers. "The space shuttle allows you to build a space station the way it *ought* to be built" says Lounge. "With the shuttle we can carry pieces of the station into space, assemble it there, and end up with a facility that could not be put up there any other way. That is the major reason for having built the space shuttle: so that we can take the next step to the frontier."

While the United States was developing the space shuttle, the Russians sent up a space station a piece at a time by rocket. It has allowed them to keep cosmonauts in space for over 200 days.

Lounge does not underestimate the Russians' accomplishments or capabilities. "If they can keep a person up there full time, they probably will. There are a lot of reasons to do that, in addition to resource management reasons and national security reasons."



Will this lead to deep space dogfights of the *Star Master* kind?

"Probably not in our lifetime" smiles Lounge. "The radiation involved would wipe out any kind of computer chip that we're depending on. That's the main vulnerability. All the systems that we use in space depend on silicon chips for their control. And if they break down, you have a bunch of junk floating around out there. And there's not much you can do with bailing wire, the way you might fix your car."

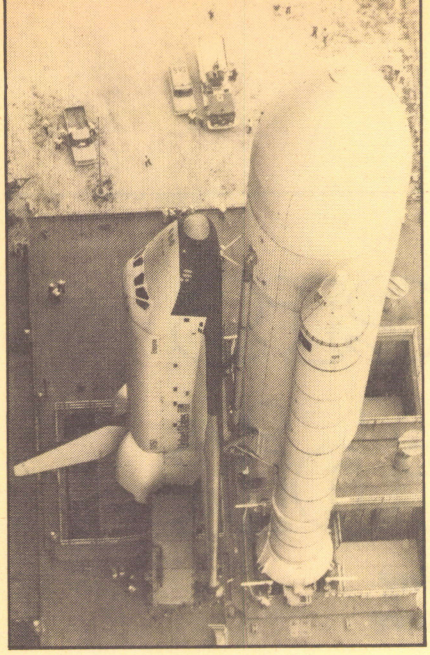
Mike Lounge was born in 1946 in Denver, Colorado and grew up in Burlington. After his graduation from the Naval Academy, he spent nine years of active service in the Navy: flight officer training; advanced training as a radar intercept officer in the F-4J Phantom; a nine month Southeast Asia tour aboard the *USS Enterprise* with Fighter Squadron 142, during which he participated in 99 combat missions. He resigned his commission in 1978 to work as an engineer at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.

When Lounge was selected as an astronaut candidate, he underwent a year-long program of training and evaluation before he became eligible for assignment as a mission specialist, someone who concentrates on the mission itself: the payload and its deployment and a space walk, if called for.

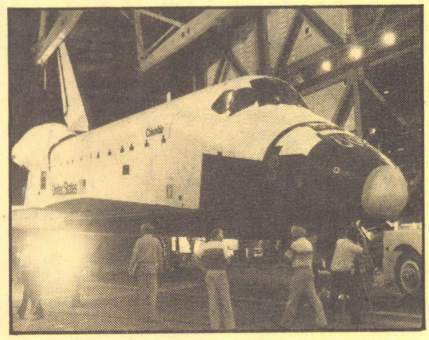
Lounge is pleased with the prospects of a space walk, but his enthusiasm is tempered with caution. "Those few that have taken a walk in space have reported a feeling of euphoria. It took a real concentrated effort for them to discipline themselves to the task at hand. It's not a very safe thing to do." Part of the problem is that there is no way to accurately simulate space-walk conditions in training. Computer graphics dish up everything in a shuttle mockup — except that. "The way we train for that" reports Lounge, "is by climbing into a big swimming pool in a space suit that has been modified for water. That's not a very accurate simulation."

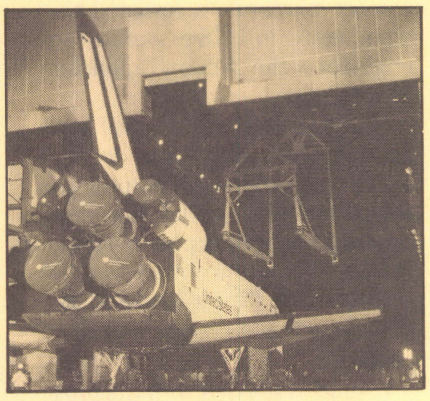
In this age of fiscal austerity, NASA has joined with virutally every federal agency in crying poor. But Lounge feels that the problem is more serious than simple underfunding; he feels that the dwindling clout of NASA reflects a crisis in the American spirit.

"In 1961 we made a decision to go to the moon before we had ever put a man in orbit. It was just audacious! Alan Shephard had made his fifteen minute flight, but essentially we had no experience in space and had no



The space shuttle **Columbia** *viewed inside and out. Counterclockwise: the craft attached to its enormous boosters; a closeup glimpse of its powerful thrusters; the craft dwarfing technicians; and pictured with astronauts working at one of its many internal control panels.*





idea how we were going to solve all these problems. We just said we were going to do it, and ten years later we landed on the moon. We've lost a good deal of that kind of spirit. Look at the 70's and our decline in leadership in technology in relation to the rest of the world. I think there's a correlation between that decline and the relative stagnancy of the space program in the 70's."

Proponents of the space program are fond of listing the many benefits to civilian life that have sprung directly from NASA's technological achievements. Lounge is aware of those benefits, and proud of them, but he is more interested in the advances yet to be made.

"We need a vital program to stimulate the robotics industry, just as the Apollo program stimulated the computer industry in the 60's. Without that kind of stimulation to the university system and industries, we probably wouldn't be where we are today with computers and miniaturization. The spinoffs have been incredible. The calculator I've got on my wrist cost about $400 in 1970. I bought this for $29.95. Many of our advances in electronics are attributable to space science. Pacemakers, for example, and the kind of technology that allows a patient to go home that would otherwise have to stay in the hospital. These sprung from our development of life support systems that had to be small enough to fit on our backs."

"Communications is also an area that has been greatly enhanced. We're really not far from the Dick Tracy two-way wrist TV. As a matter of fact, it wouldn't be too difficult today to have a TV on your wrist that would receive directly from an existing communication satellite."

No one will deny that NASA has inspired dizzying advances in technology, and so has changed the way we all live, but the joke among officials in the industry is that Atari is five years ahead of NASA in computer technology.

But NASA does not lag far behind Atari in its own field. NASA's space shuttle trainer module uses computer graphics to simulate take-off, landing, and orbiting procedures.

"In terms of the excitement, our simulator is probably the best videogame I've ever seen" praises Lounge. "I'm not familiar with the programming details, but I imagine the techniques that are used to generate the visuals are very similar to the ones used in the arcade machines."

It is interesting to note that, before computer-generated graphics, NASA employed a system for their trainer-simulator very much like the systems used by John Dykstra and Industrial Light & Magic for such films as *Star Wars*.

"They would build a twenty-by-twenty foot board" reports Lounge, "and, in exquisite detail, construct a miniature model of whatever scene they wanted to use, such as a miniature airport or a simulated Andrews Air Force Base. Then they employed a camera, mounted on a device that would allow it to move anywhere on the board, and shoot the scene from any angle. That camera was controlled by commands from the simulator, and relayed the images back to the trainee."

Trainer-simulators aside, what does Mike Lounge, space shuttle astronaut, think of the videogame craze?

"There are a lot of articles written to the effect that children spend too much time on videogames, that they lose touch with reality. I can't say whether that's true or not. I don't allow my child to do that. I think that they're a very worthwhile recreational device in the following sense: there's no way we can cope with the world we have today and ignore computers. And if videogames help our children accept that, be more comfortable around computers, stimulate curiosity about them and how they work, then it will help them in their life. Anything we can do for our children that will encourage that adjustment is beneficial."

"There are a lot of people that are scared to death of computers, and I think they're going to have a rough time, because they can't avoid them. But people went through the same thing when Henry Ford invented his fancy new machine. I imagine there were people that were terrified of it, that refused to try to understand how there could be an internal combustion system. Today there aren't many people that are afraid of automobiles. They don't understand any better than the people a long time ago how the internal combustion system works, they

Continued on page 69

fiction

A Video Game of Murder

by Richard Meyers

USER DEADLY

Part Two: RIP OFF

What has gone before: Detective M.T. Sloan has found a corpse in a videogame. The arcade is in an uproar, but Sloan's a pro . . .

Three Mile Island exploded while Sherlock Holmes laughed.

I snapped back into full consciousness with a painful jolt. That was a bad one. In fact, it was the worst nightmare since the fateful Christmas Day dream that rendered my legs useless for a full thirty seconds when I was thirteen. That horror was simply filled with shapes and a frightening sense of time. This new night terror was a bit more accessible. All my collected fears and inadequacies ganged up on me while I was almost asleep. No fair hitting a man when he's down.

Otherwise, the two dreams were similar. They both occurred in that Twilight Zone between waking and slumber. I distinctly remember hearing my tiny Timex L.C.D. Digital "Snooz-Alarm" Travel Clock go off, pulling me out of a fitful sleep. I also recall tapping the "repeat alarm bar" on the clock's top which silenced the electronic beeping for four minutes. I promised myself that I wouldn't demand a return match with the sandman, but it was no good. I drifted off in the company of Rod Serling.

"Portrait of a private eye wrestling with reality," he'd say. "Unsure of his skills and frightened by a close brush with someone else's death, Milton Tobias Sloan's subconscious attacks him with full force . . . in the Twilight Zone."

I didn't actually see Rod Serling narrate my dream. Instead I saw Christopher Plummer as Sherlock Holmes giving me a tour of the crippled nuclear reactor plant Three Mile Island. I can't remember all the specifics except for the climax. With a flourish, he threw open a door in my face, exposing the melting reactor core, and unleashing a ball of glorious death. It burst in my face and I snapped back into the real world as if propelled on the end of Indiana Jones' whip.

I don't know whether the sweat covering my body was a response to the nightmare or just the natural result of sleeping in my office. The black, lumpy, high backed couch was pretty close to the radiator after all. Deciding not to ponder that particular mystery, I awkwardly put my feet on the floor in preparation for the new day and the new week.

The Timex Travel Alarm Clock went off again, and as I turned off the alarm switch, I realized that the dream had occurred in the four minutes between beeps. That's what I get for watching cable TV before hitting the sack.

By the time I got my balance and was upright, I was almost totally reassimilated to my personal reality. It was Monday, September nineteenth. I was in my one-room office on the fourth floor of an ex-Municipal building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I could not see Three Mile Island through my room's four windows, but I knew it was out there somewhere.

I couldn't see much of anything out of my windows except bricks. That's why my rent was so cheap. I had an expansive view of an alley behind my desk and a lovely angle capturing all the nuances of a wall to the right. It was fairly well illuminated, so at least I knew it was a sunny day. Now that I'm giving the tour, you might as well get the whole trip.

The couch is along the left wall. Behind it is a metal book case that reaches all the way up to the twelve foot high ceiling. Along the ceiling is a network of pipes. I don't know what they're for and I don't want to know. I've already established that my plain dark wooden desk is along the back wall in front of the window. I've got filing cabinets on either side of that, an IBM Selectric Model D on a rolling metal typewriter table to the right, and a round wooden table between the desk's left side and the sofa.

In front of the desk are two matching straightback padded chairs with less than elegant blue and green checkerboard upholstery. They are not as awful-looking as they sound. Against the right wall are several more folding chairs in case the Osmond Family wants to interview me. The rest of the details are fairly irrelevant at this time, except for the makeshift cubicle that encloses the door nestled in the corner of the front and left walls.

My cubicle was just two thick eight foot tall wooden flats nailed together with an entrance and pay window cut out. It was sufficient for its purpose: a buffer against whomever came through the door with the neatly stenciled "Milton T. Sloan - Private Investigator" on the glass.

I had an impassioned discussion with the stenciler about that. He wanted to save time with "Milton Sloan - Investigations." I wanted my full name in addition to "Private Investigations." I thought the "Private" was important. We compromised, and he had to redo it anyway after spelling it 'Investigater." I knew what was right. I looked it up.

I looked up again as the door in question opened. Through the sliding cashier's window, I could see the unmistakable girth of Anthony F. Allegra, Attorney at Law. Thankfully, I had snoozed in a shirt and pants. All I had to do now was slip on the vest, tie and jacket and I'd look vaguely professional. I'm sure Tony wouldn't mind. He had seen me look at lot worse. And if he hadn't, he'd make believe he had.

"You look lousy," he said cheerily, coming through the cubicle's opening and snapping on the lights. He looked as resplendent as he could be in a three-piece suit just barely holding on for dear life across his massive torso. Measuring in at about five feet, nine inches, he must've been close to

two hundred and fifty pounds. Add to that his habit of smoking like a bonfire and chugging down a case of diet soda every day and you've got a wonderful sight to see first thing on Monday morning.

"Hello to you too," I said flatly, leaning over to open my tiny refrigerator nestled against the wall behind my desk.

"You should get a secretary," he continued in that tar and nicotine encrusted way of his. "Just about anybody could waltz in here."

"So I see," I replied, straightening with a milk bottle full of water in my hand. I unscrewed the cap and took a swig. Opening my desk's side drawer, I pulled out a paper towel — cleverly stolen from the men's room down the hall — dampened it with some more water, and wiped my face. "I don't need a secretary," I finally answered him. "I have a machine."

I motioned toward the squat, oblong plastic box on the corner of my desk. Another modern wonder, it recorded whatever message I could fit on a thirty second repeating tape, making me sound like I was dying of emphysema no matter how clearly I enunciated. "When you hear the beep tone, please hurry up and leave a message before Panasonic cuts you off." Or something to that effect.

I pulled a dark-maroon colored tie out of my bottom drawer and started to knot. Allegra settled into the chair to my left and folded his hands over his stomach. He watched me try to tie the damn thing for a few moments until his attention was distracted by the pile of material on my desk. Without asking permission, he began to rifle through.

"What is all this junk?" he demanded, lifting book after pamphlet. " 'New Voices In Japanese Cinema?' 'The Fifth International Hong Kong Film Festival Souvenir Book?' 'The Samurai Film?' What the hell are you studying now?"

"Just some light reading," I countered casually. "When I have to go to the bathroom."

Tony dropped the books in mock disgust. "When are you going to read something that'll do you some good? Everytime I come in here, you're researching some crazy thing that wouldn't help an investigator the least little bit. Hell, it wouldn't do anybody any good!"

"It's interesting," I shrugged, feeling a small need to defend my admittedly esoteric tastes. "Nobody knows about Oriental Cinema."

"Nobody needs to!" Allegra stressed. "Why don't you study up on surgical procedure? Then I could throw some more work your way."

I deftly fielded that with a small twist of my head and a noncommital grimace. When Allegra was right, he was right. It seems I just can't help learning about anything that suits my fancy. But my fancy was concerned with the strangest things. Last week, it was the cinema of Holland and New Zealand. This week I worked my way over to the Far East. Fascinating stuff, really. With a population in the billions, the Chinese movie studios have to work on at least four movies at once to supply the demand. And it wasn't until the mid-seventies that they became proficient with the technology at all.

Sorry, I got carried away. Anyhow, I rationalized that research like this sharpened my investigative abilities. It isn't easy finding out all there is to know about Oriental movies in Harrisburg. And I made sure it didn't eat into my work hours.

I finally got the tie knotted right and slipped the long ends into my pants. The charcoal-colored vest went on next and I faced the silent Allegra as I began to button up.

He glared at me with his lips pursed for several seconds, then could contain himself no longer. "You're not curious at all, are you?" he accused with a certain amount of whimsy.

"What?" I cleverly came back, my mind's blackboard completely clean.

"What?" he mimicked. "You find a goddamned corpse in a video machine and all you can say is 'what?'."

"Oh," I said. "That." Well, at least I knew why he had invaded my office at eight thirty-six a.m. I knew it couldn't have been to pass the time of day or demand an update on the cases I was working on for him. I'd given him a complete report on Friday.

"Yes, that," he responded with impatience. "Are you trying to tell me you're not the least little bit interested about who the victim was or how he got inside a video machine?"

"Yes," I lied.

"Is that 'yes, I'm not interested,' or 'yes, I want to know.'?"

"No, I don't want to know," I shot back. Why the hell was this guy crawling across me so early on a Monday morning? What did he want from me? Who did he think I was? Ellery Queen? Nero Wolfe? Nick Charles? Sherlock Holmes?

Lord, I loved the way Holmes smiled. All the actors who played Holmes smiled that smile at one point or another. I think a prerequisite for playing the part is to master that smile.

That was all that was needed to show us ignorant peons in the audience that Holmes knew what it was all about. He'd ask a seemingly innocent question, get an equally innocent answer and then just smile and smile. It was a barely contained expression of clear-minded joy.

That smile said that he was always one step ahead of everyone and he knew it. Everyone on screen and in the audience would be scratching their heads and picking their noses in confusion, but good old Sherlock would just be smirking away — waiting for everybody to give up before he'd roll out a perfectly elementary summation.

I'd give the collected works of Chinese director Liu Chia Liang to smile that smile ... just once. It was the smile of supercilious genius, the smile of smug brilliance. It was the smile that said "I know something you don't know." It was the smile Anthony Allegra was showering me with at that very moment.

I ignored it to reopen my fridge and pull out a banana, an egg, a jar of wheatgerm and a carton of milk. Plugging in the blender that was resting on an empty section of shelf, I peeled, cracked, spooned and poured the concoction together. I had placed the cap on the blender top before Tony spoke again.

"You sure?" he baited.

As reply, I turned on the machine. The mixing of the fruit, grain, egg, and liquid drowned out any other ploys the lawyer might pull, while I decided upon which glass to use. I had a wide choice. There were the four tumblers I got from filling up my gas tank with Super Unleaded at the nearby Shell station, my Ronald McDonald glass, a Wendy's Star Wars glass, an extra large Yosemite Sam plastic cup from Seven-Eleven, and a great mug from Burger King with the inscription "Have It Your Way." I chose the latter.

After switching off the machine, I poured a generous portion in the mug. "Like something to drink?" I asked Allegra. Always the charming host.

He made a face of distaste. "Do you have any Shasta?"

I checked the fridge. "Tab," I replied, neatly palming a

can and tossing it to him. "What a beautiful drink."

"For beautiful people," he chimed in, opening the pop top at arm's length and then raising the can in salute.

Holmes would have known what to do, I decided, settling behind my desk with my morning mixture. Some people need coffee to become civilized. I'd become an addict of the mixture. I could feel it powering my various limbs and organs. Sherlock Holmes could afford to take on cases just because they interested him. He was a fictional character solving the murders of imaginary victims. I had bills to pay and had looked into the face of an actual dead person. It wasn't fun. Interesting, maybe. Fun? Forget it.

Okay, sure, I wanted to know who he was and how he got there. I just didn't want to be the one who found out. It had been bad enough waiting for the less than polite Bethlehem PA police and giving my statement over and over and over while watching the paramedics extradite the adult, middle-aged corpse from his videogame coffin.

I mean, this guy was dead and he didn't look happy about it. I could see a rotting wound on his forehead with a stream of dried blood making a beeline under his shirt collar. I could see his once beige shirt caked brown with even more blood. I could also see my ten year old estranged daughter Audrey watching it all with a sickening fascination.

She didn't seem to realize that this was once a living person. To her, it was just like being on the set of *Hill Street Blues*. She didn't mind that we didn't get home until ten p.m. Her mother did, though. Leah gave me what-for until I explained and then she gave me where-to, as if I was somehow to blame for the murder just because I was a detective.

Oh yes ... murder. Granted, it was remotely possible that someone could deal himself a mortal wound while inside a videogame — fixing it perhaps — but that person would no longer be in any shape to lock himself in and ship the machine to a local arcade.

Allegra swigged down some Tab, swallowed elaborately and targeted me with a challenging stare. "Come now, Milton," he chastised. "You found the corpus delecti. Don't you consider it your sworn duty to follow through?"

"If you're interested," I retorted, my intellect strengthened by the mixture, "I can find out for you for only thirty-six dollars an hour."

Tony grinned and pulled his head back. "You're getting a little officious about this, aren't you?"

Allegra was just one of many who were fascinated by the workings of perverted crime. He was the one who had told me about the cuckolded surgeon who sewed his wife's and her lover's faces together: a true story. Tony defended many criminals and, to him, it was all a titillating exercise in legalities. Unfortunately, I always had to play in the dirt. It was me who often had to view the results of the court case. That occasionally meant meetings in the morgue. Fortunately, the investigating cops got the worst of it. They had to clean up after the killers. Allegra paid me very well just to tie up the force's loose ends concerning his clients.

"Look, Tony," I said, leaning back. "If I went off tilting at this videogame windmill, how would I find the time to check into your CarolCo oil thing, the teacher's breach of contract suit, and the Morin manslaughter case? Besides, who's going to pay me?"

"You could always dig up a client along the way."

"Wishful thinking," I grunted. That was Allegra all over. He always looked on the bright side whenever it was somebody else's time and money concerned. Still, he always filled in my schedule with interesting work. Currently on his behalf, I was checking up on CarolCo's history to see if they were worth a client's investment, finding out the school's side of the story concerning a bitter teacher dispute and just checking to see whether Sam Morin killed his brother-in-law the way the police reports said he did.

A solvent detective's work is never done. I had worked hard for my license and took my job seriously. That meant I was usually juggling at least five cases at a time. And I prided myself on juggling well. I organized my working hours so no one had to take the short end of the schedule. Especially Tony, but he seemed intent on forcing the videogame victim down my throat.

"Well, as soon as I heard about it on the news, I asked around." Allegra had a network of informant shopkeepers, bartenders, restaurant managers, cops, lawyers and judges that would make the Black Hand envious. "No identification on the body. It looked to be purposely removed. Even the label on the tailor-made shirt was cut out."

"Well, that says something right there," I mused. Well, I was a licensed detective, damn it. I felt the need to keep proving it. "He had to be wealthy or egocentric enough to have tailor-made shirts."

"It could have been his one and only," Allegra suggested. Having been a lawyer so long, he felt the need to play Devil's Advocate.

"Give me a break, will you?" I groaned. "Nobody buys just one tailor-made shirt. The seamster's union would start breaking arms."

"All body jewelry was removed as well," Allegra continued, ignoring me. "From the looks of it, a ring and watch were taken. Very expensive ones too."

I looked up from the mangled paper clip I had taken from the desktop. "How can a flesh indentation of a removed watch and ring look expensive?"

Tony wiggled his arm until his own watch appeared from under his shirt cuff. It was a gold Seiko. "There are ways," he said mysteriously. "I'm just telling you what I heard."

It was time to quit fooling around. It was Monday and I had work to do.

"What finger was the ring on?" I asked, leaning forward and clasping my hands on the desk blotter.

After a surprised pause, Allegra replied. "I wasn't told."

"What kind of pants was he wearing?"

Treating it like a trick question — which it really was — the attorney answered. "Dark ones."

"I could see that. I was there. What material were they?"

"I don't know." Tony didn't like not knowing things. It pissed him off. "Anything else?" he snapped.

"Yeah," I said slowly. "Find out what kind of socks he was wearing."

Allegra stood up abruptly, the look on his face saying he thought I was ragging him. Actually, I wasn't, but I didn't mind him thinking so. It might be interesting to get the answers, but let the fuzz figure it out. As I said before, I wasn't interested.

Before the lawyer could get out the door, it swung in, revealing a small, bald, bespectacled bundle of energy in a flannel shirt and jeans. This was Matthew, my messenger. Matthew was the thirty-six year old retarded son of the landlord who I paid to deliver things and clean up the office. He had the body of a miniature bull and the face of a child. His hairless pate was slightly pin-headed.

"Mr. Sloan," he called in the thick, slightly lisped speech he had. "Call on line one." All my black dial phone had was line one. Matthew just enjoyed saying that.

As the two men stood in the doorway, I rose to slip on a tweed jacket. I reached over to a cardboard box and picked out an herbal teabag.

"What kind today?" I asked Matthew, holding it up to my ear. "Can you see it from there?" Matthew's eyesight was not the best and his thick, black rimmed glasses were store-bought, so I took every opportunity to exercise his orbs.

"Cinnamon Apple," he said with a big smile.

I was impressed. Sure enough, I looked at the tag attached to the string and it read what Matthew had said. "That's amazing," I commended. Even my eyes weren't that good.

"The label is red," Matthew laughed and disappeared. He had caught me again. Cinnamon Apple was indeed a red label. Toasty Spice was a brown one. All he had seen was the color. Retarded or not, he had a sharp mind.

I frowned, nodded, and stuck the tea bag in the jacket's breast pocket. Ever since I had seen a man burned by setting his cologne of fire, I had taken to using the aroma of herbal tea bags as my aftershave. The more I sweated, the nicer I smelled.

"Why do you talk to that guy?" Allegra sniffed after Matthew had left. "He rarely makes sense."

Moving to the phone, I said, " 'Talking is one talent. Making sense is completely another.' Pogo."

Tony threw up his hands as I picked up the phone. "Some people quote Shakespeare. You quote Pogo."

" 'Anything too stupid to be said is sung,' " I told him quickly, bringing the receiver to my head. "Voltaire. There, you happy now? Hello?"

Allegra shook his head and went down the hall to his own office. "Hello," replied the mellifluous voice on the other end. "Milton? Empty? Is that you?"

That's just what I needed. Of course I recognized the voice almost instantly. There was that one shred of a second it took to swing from my ear through my heart and into my brain like a broken electrical cord. Cupid put my mind on hold, giggling.

Barbara. It was Barbara.

I could see her clearly in my mind's eye. As often as I demanded she pack up and get out, she never really left. She always hovered there, out of the way until she thought it was safe to show herself. Show herself and that innocent smile, those devastating dark blue eyes, that perfectly proportioned form ... what a minx that girl was.

She was the antithesis of Leah. They both were nicely shaped, but my ex-wife was an olive-tanned, dark eyed jungle cat. Barbara, well, Barbara was a purring, long haired, pampered house pet. She could wear a sweater like no one else and her long legs looked magnificent beneath the cloth of her slacks. She didn't wear skirts, she said, because she didn't like her legs. But I saw her in a bathing suit once. At the "Y". She had to be kidding. Whoever coined the slang word "gams" must've known Barbara.

"Hello?" said her voice on the phone. "Is this Milton Tobias Sloan?"

I snapped out of it. "Yes, hello?" I answered, my voice clogged.

"Is this the Milton Sloan who went to Hunter College?"

"Yes," I replied, a sense of resignation slipping over me like a too-tight jersey.

"I don't know if you'll remember me ..." Who did she think she was kidding? "But this is Barbara Sherman. I mean, Barbara Kasprzycki. I went to Hunter too."

"Barbara?" I asked innocently. I sat down quickly, hoping to use the edge of the desk as leverage. "Sure I remember." Who did I think I was kidding? "Hi, How are you?" It took an extreme effort to keep my teeth from grinding against each other.

"Hi. I was just going through the phone book ..."

"Through the 'S's?" I couldn't keep myself from interjecting incredulously.

"No," she said quietly. "Through the Private Detectives listings in the Yellow Pages."

"Oh," I said.

"Oh, Empty, could you please come over here right away?" she pleaded, all her initial coyness disappearing in a cloud of angst. "The police won't help me ... I don't know where to turn ... what to do ..."

Time to slip on the tarnished armor and jump on the white horse. "Take it easy, Barbara," I soothed. "Where are you?" That's me, Hard-to-Get Miltie.

"I'm at home."

"What's the matter?"

"My husband's missing."

"Is that Mister Sherman?"

"Yes."

"What happened to Mister Braddock?" I'm sorry. I apologize. I couldn't help myself. Richie Braddock was the one she dropped me for. Like a hot potato. I thought I was doing real well. I thought she had seen the kind of person I thought I was. I thought this classic prom queen was going to leave all the glitter behind to slavishly adore me through eternity.

"He was my first husband," she replied hesitantly. "We're divorced."

That's putting me in my place, baby. She couldn't very well miss the bitterness and sarcasm in my voice, but it seemed her need was greater than my ego. She chose to ignore it. Then again, I was the tough private dick, so maybe she thought I was supposed to ask brusque questions. Maybe I thought I was supposed to as well.

"How long has your husband been missing?" I figured I might as well get the preliminaries out of the way before my meter started running. I pulled out a small spiral notebook and started writing.

"I don't know. I just got back. He didn't come home and he isn't at the office."

"Where have you been?"

"Visiting my parents."

"Where do they live?"

"Reading," she said, then added, "Pennsylvania."

"What does your husband do?"

"He's a designer."

She was getting obtuse. "What does he design?"

She hesitated, as if reluctant or ashamed. "Games," she finally said.

Dread walked in the front door, marched across the floor, took off its glove and slapped me across the face. "What kind of games?"

There was no way out for her this time. "Videogames," she said.

"I'll be right over," I said.

NEXT ISSUE: Part three "Lock-n-Chase."

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- Official Membership Certificate—featuring a color photo of E.T. and Elliott and bicycle, complete with E.T.'s footprint signature.
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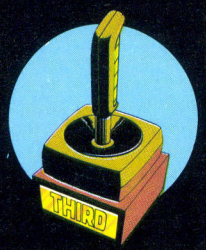
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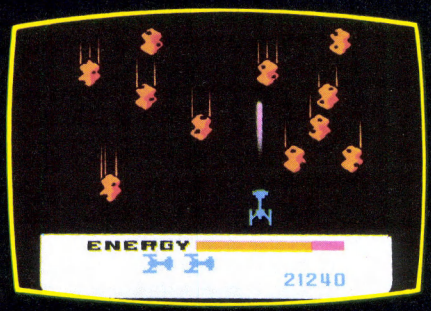
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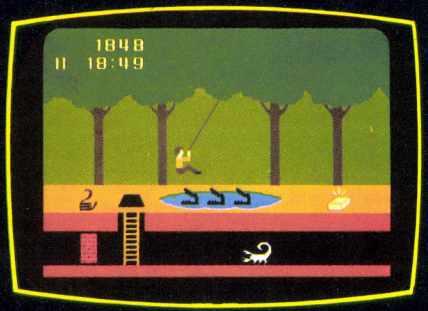
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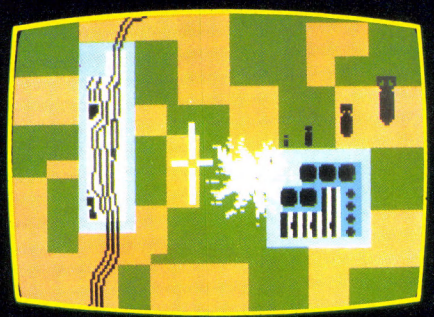

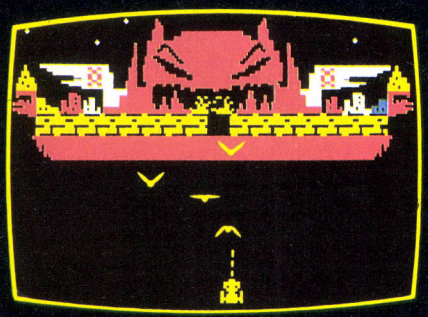

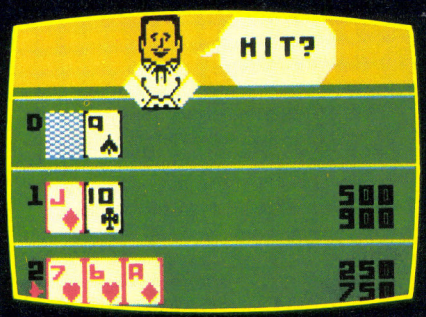
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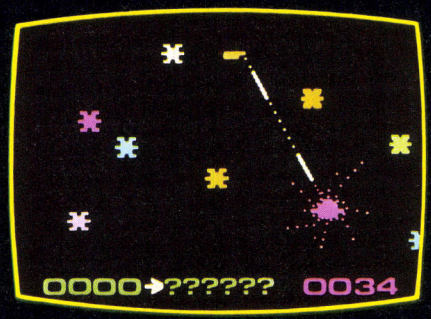
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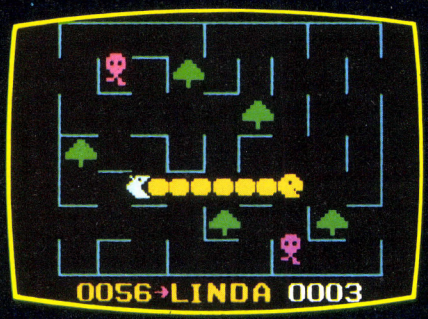
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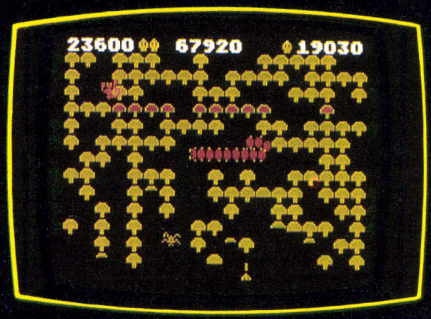
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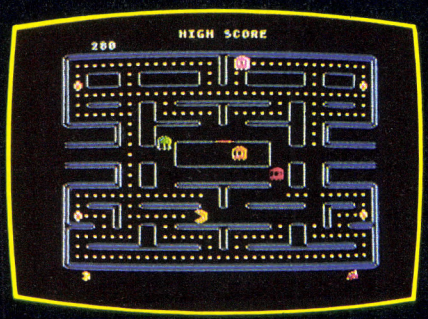
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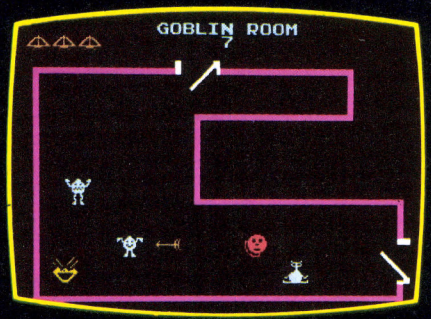
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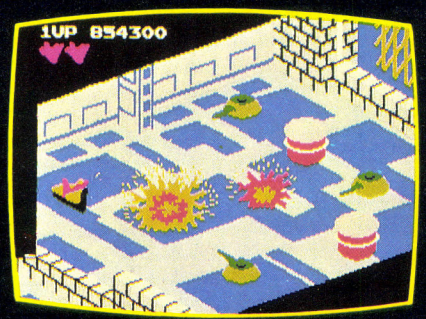
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Presenting: The First Annual Vista Awards!

Videogaming Illustrated *picks the best cartridges on the market.*

It's been three months since you were given a home videogame system for the holidays, and you're scouting around for new cartridges, new challenges.

Or perhaps you're going to splurge and pick up those games you've wanted for years.

Maybe you're wondering if you shouldn't add one or two of those *other* systems to your hardware collection.

Whatever your reason for heading to the local video store, there are certain games which shine above the rest, cartridges which boast extraordinary play, graphics, or other virtues.

The staff of this magazine has been playing videogames for years and, unlike many consumers, we also have the advantage of testing every new game which hits the market. You've read our reviews in "Preview," but that's only half the story, the recent products. Some of them are indeed brilliant, but we felt our readers should have the benefit of our expertise in recommending the top-of-the-line videogames, old as well as new, so that they could get the most out of their home unit.

Here, then, are the first annual *VISTAs* — the *Videogaming Illustrated* Software Thrall Awards.

The best videogames money can buy.

First, however, a few words on the categories and how the winners and runners-up were selected.

We created categories which would satisfy every taste. Graphics are more important to some players than gameplay so, for each of the major systems, we singled-out games whose visuals are extra-special.

We also picked a "Best Game" overall, selected from the winners in each category. It's true that certain games had an advantage, being compatible with systems boasting more sophisticated memory. However, we don't qualify the statement that Abraham Lincoln was a better President than Warren Harding simply because of circumstance: it's the bottom line that counts.

At the risk of striking a note reminiscent of these boring perorations delivered at the Academy Awards, we're obliged to let you in on how these selections were made.

To begin with, we limited our selections to the four major systems: Atari 2600 and 5200, Intellivision, ColecoVision, and Odyssey. With Channel F and Astrocade struggling from limbo, and Vectrex just getting started, we felt it was pointless to pit them against the giants.

In terms of establishing categories, the twenty-seven of our staff and freelance writers, editors, and consultants directly associated with home videogames were asked to submit suggested divisions, which they did. These were then discussed in a round-table session from which the final list was hammered.

Categories such as ColecoVision sports were not incorporated because, obviously, with two games in the marketplace it would hardly have been a contest.

Each of the videogamers was next required to suggest three games for each category. Discontinued games were not allowed in the balloting. The games most frequently mentioned were then given to all the panel members, who were asked to pick the one best in each category — and explain why they voted the way they did.

The winner won the Vista and the runner-up won — well, second place carries with it the not-to-be-snickered-at distinction of being a damn fine videogame.

For the record, of thirty winners, the companies scored as follows: Atari, 6; Coleco, 5; Intellivision, 4; Activision, 4; Imagic, 4; Odyssey, 4; Parker Brothers, 1; Vidtec, 1; M Network, 1.

Absent from the final results, though not from the balloting, were all the games produced by these companies as well as Telesys, Apollo, SpectraVision, CBS Videogames, 20th Century Fox Games of the Century, Tigervision, VentureVision, Mystique, and Wizard Videogames.

As these companies release more games, they are sure to have better luck next time.

Continued on page 58

behind the scenes

DIG DUG MOVIE STAR

The making of a videogame commercial commercial.

by Richard Meyers

Last October, moviegoers waiting to be lulled by *On Golden Pond* or frightened by *Halloween III* were in for a surprise. The screens of their local cinemas suddenly pulsated with a riveting display of light and sound followed by scenes of Washington, D.C., the midwest, a secret laboratory, and a lover's lane being rocked by violent earth tremors. As they were tossed about like tenpins, bewildered bureaucrats, farmers, scientists, and lovers frantically sought to identify the source of this earth-shaking occurence.

Only then did the new star of arcade and screen respond with a heavy rock and roll lyric: "Come on everybody, take a chance. Go underground and do the Dig Dug dance. First you tunnel through a wall of dirt ... burrow underground without being hurt. Quick now, turn around, what'll you do? A lot of monster meanies are running after you ... Dig Dug ... Dig Dug ... Dig Dug."

Yes, it was the triumphant first appearance of an arcade videogame on the motion picture screen. But not as a full fledged star of a feature. Dig Dug, the Namco game licensed by Atari, was the leading character of a promo — a two minute and twenty-two second advertisement, cannily produced to look like a preview of coming attractions.

"It's a wild spoof, really," says Kathy Erskine, the creative supervisor at Young and Rubicam — the producers of the short — and co-author of the script and song. "It's a satire of a certain type of movie trailer. Because it was made especially for movie theaters, we wanted it to have the feel of a preview, as though Dig Dug itself was an epic cinematic event. We called it 'the greatest thing ever to hit a screen.' "

The care and expertise the agency lavished on the spot was similar to that given by a dedicated, multimillion dollar full-length feature crew. Once Atari agreed to bankroll a commercial made specifically for movie theaters in order to further tap the teen crowd, only the best would do. Kathy Erskine started working up storyboards with art director Jerry Roach under the guidance of creative director Frank DeVito and associate creative director Bill Appleman.

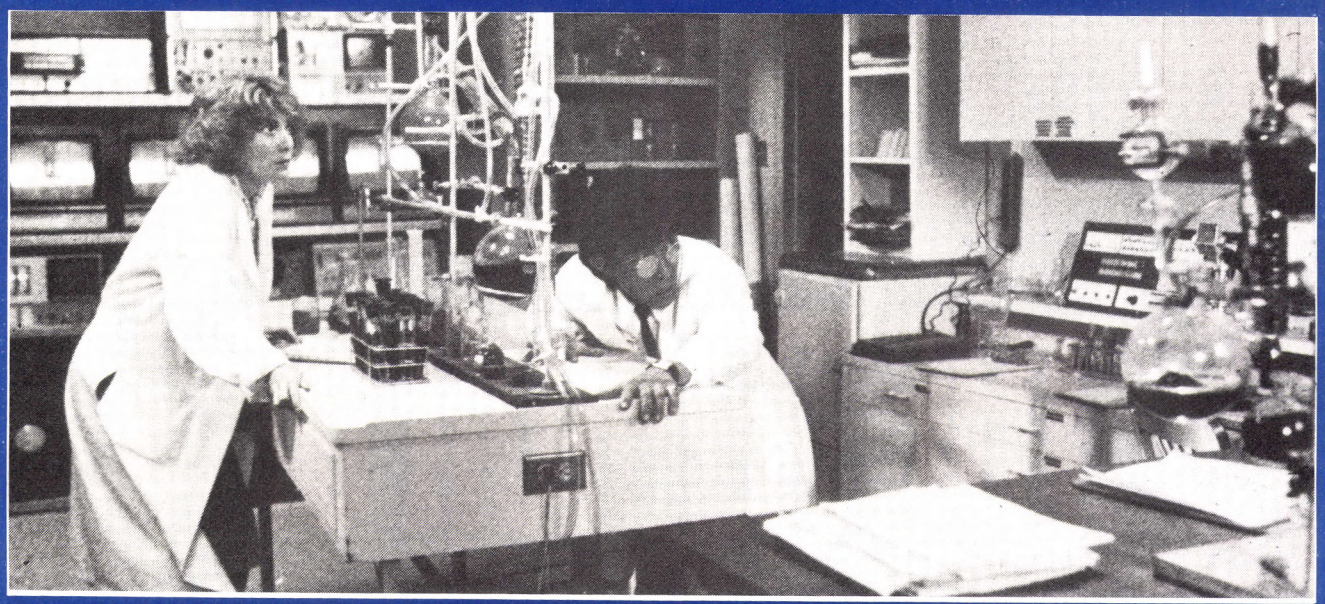
Once they decided on the approach, they had to get the approval of both Atari's coin-op division and their advertising department. "They like it," Erskine remembers. "It was impressionistic. We were all experimenting in the new medium so there was a great deal of interaction and cooperation. The spot grew organically, borrowing from such film genres as the war movie, the science fiction epic, and the young love flick."

The movie theater ad starts with an international meeting on science and technology presided by a Henry Kissinger look-alike in a place reminiscent of the Pentagon. The sonorous assembly is shaken from their apathy when something appears on the radar screen in the middle of the conference table.

Meanwhile, an elderly couple on their farm house porch are stunned to see their cornstalks disappearing one after another and the wooden porch slats rippling like piano keys as if someone — or something — were burrowing just beneath them.

Their amazement is mirrored by the two young lovers who watch their red convertible sports car swell up just like the tomato-like Pooka character in the Dig Dug game. Finally, a trio of scientists in a fully stocked lab are aghast to see the videogame take over all their computer monitors.

"From there, we go to the Dig Dug Band," Erskine relates. "You see their shining behinds shimmy into the frame. They turn around to tell us the story through the Dig Dug Song. 'Dig a maze deep in the ground ... when a flower sprouts, play another round ... but you've got to have an air tight strategy to survive in the mine with your enemy ... 'cause Fygar and Pooka are very sly ... as your score



Dig Dug shakes up a scientific research lab as effectively as the little digger shook up arcades across America. Atari missed a good bet by not producing their motion picture commercial in ground-rattling Sensurround.

gets higher, they multiply … Dig Dug, Dig Dug, Dig Dug.' "

Erskine wrote the words. Joey Levine, the head of Crushing Enterprises, wrote the music and orchestrated the freelance singers. Lester Wilson, Ann-Margaret's dance master, put together and choreographed the on-screen Dig Dug Band. Directly behind the camera was Ralph Boda, who also worked on *Coal Miner's Daughter.* Helming the crew was Manny Perez, Young and Rubicam's chief of production.

Responsible for Dig Dug's reign of terror was production designer Jim Spencer, who had recently come from the special effects crew of *Poltergeist.* "These guys were absolutely unbelievable," Erskine lauds. "They made Dig Dug burrow through the ground, pumping up it's enemies while the farmers, scientists, lovers, and Government leaders react in live action. Their lives are a complete mess until it is discovered that all Dig Dug wants to do is be friendly so we can all have lots of fun playing the game. Everyone ends up in the arcade, naturally, playing this great game."

The Dig Dug extravaganza took five days to film, with one day devoted exclusively to shooting the actual videogame screen. The result is a madcap, throughly memorable and unique advertising achievement — the first theatrical videogame promotion. Atari is satisfied, Young and Rubicam is proud, and teenage audiences are entertained. So what can we do but join in? The Dig Dug Song finale, if you please. . . .

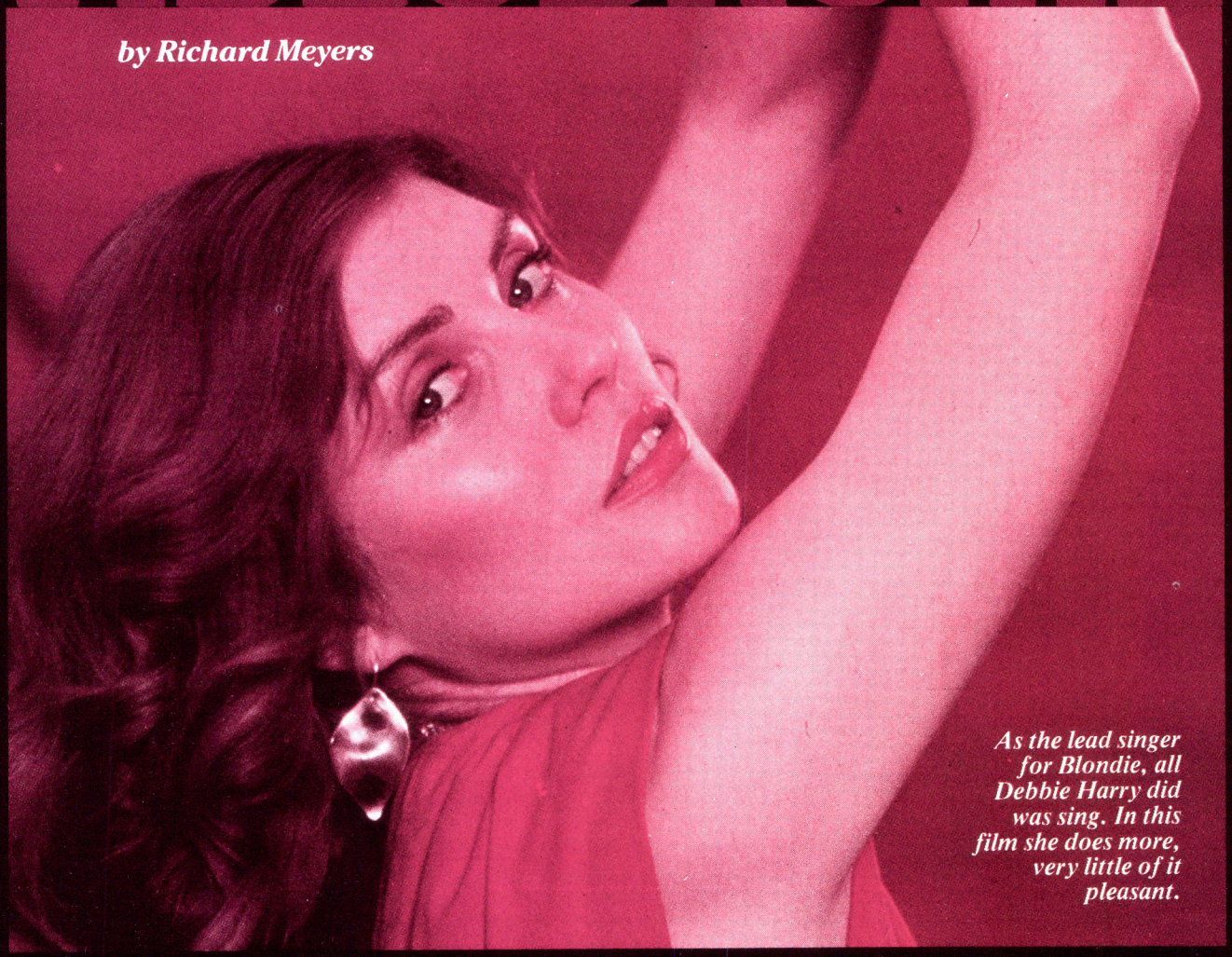
"Use your pump just like a bazooka. Use it to blow up the bad man Pooka. Pump up Fygar and put out his flame. Eat all the veggies and win the game. Release all the rocks, now watch them fall. Dig Dug is the greatest miner of them all! Dig Dug … Dig Dug … Dig Dug. …"

How do you keep them down on the farm after they've seen videogames? Well, there's more than corn growing here as Dig Dug burrows under the porch. It's all part of Atari's first advertisement made for movie theatres.

David Cronenberg, the self proclaimed "Master of Horror," presents a thriller in which people are destroyed by TV.

THE TERROR OF VIDEODROME

by Richard Meyers



As the lead singer for Blondie, all Debbie Harry did was sing. In this film she does more, very little of it pleasant.

When video employee Harlan discovers the broadcast signal of the sadistic TV station known as Videodrome, the programs mesmerize a small-time television executive Max Renn (James Woods) and psychologist Nicki Brand (Deborah Harry) in a film which mixes eroticism, violence, and terror with the television medium. As a result, reality loses all meaning for the couple.

First there were slug-like parasites that burrowed under human flesh to turn their living hosts into maniacs.

Then there was an organic, disease-spreading syringe living inside a woman and transforming her victims into killers.

Next came a platoon of homicidal tots born from boil-like sacks on the body of an insane woman.

Finally, there was a secret army of telepaths embroiled in a bloody war where anyone who got in the way had their head exploded.

These stories were the work of film director David Cronenberg, who parlayed his love of the macabre into mind-twisting, often stomach-turning movies that made him a cult favorite of moviegoers.

From the leeches of *They Came From Within* through the demented characters of *Rabid*, to the tiny hellions known as *The Brood* and the two warring psychics known as *Scanners*, Cronenberg has given his select audience violent visions that packed enough visceral power to make him the most successful filmmaker in Canadian history.

That fame, plus his consistent ability to make inexpensive yet striking pictures that always turn a profit, brought Cronenberg to the attention of Hollywood. Universal Studios, in particular — the studio which distributed *E.T.* throughout the world — seemed intent on giving the young cinematic surrealist a chance at his "breakthrough" film: a movie with a big enough budget to fully realize whatever vision Cronenberg chose, and possessing a big enough publicity push to make his audience wider than ever before.

Some artists would respond to that opportunity by altering their approach into something the studio would consider more acceptable, but not Cronenberg. Instead, he melded his penchant for outrageous visuals with his most riveting concept yet, an idea more frightening than his other films because it's *possible*.

With Universal backing it, there may be no place where you can hide from *Videodrome*.

Imagine a TV station that takes the apathetic cruelty of local news programs, the mindless titillation of network sitcoms, and the R-rated fare of cable television — and does them all one better.

Imagine a clandestine TV signal being beamed directly to subscribers' homes, a signal that shows audience hardcore sex and awful violence … all real and all being played for keeps.

That's the situation in which small-time UHF television executive Max Renn finds himself. While he programs softcore sex and violence on Toronto channel number 83, a partner of his has discovered the signal of a series called Videodrome. And once Max has seen it, it won't let go.

The idea of making a movie about a "snuff" TV station would be strong enough for most movie makers, and they'd stop there. But the challenge of walking beyond the lines of brutal reality and slightly psychotic fantasy seems to be Cronenberg's favorite sport. As Renn becomes more and more obsessed with the sadistic station, his perception of reality becomes more and more twisted, until his own television starts to breathe and a slit appears in his stomach to begin sucking in videotapes … cassettes that start to resemble vital organs.

The impact of Videodrome on Renn is what the story's about. The awesome power of television is what the film's about.

Starring as Renn is James Woods, a highly regarded American lauded for his performances on TV *(Holocaust)*, the stage *(Moonchildren)* and in film *(The Onion Field)*.

Co-starring as a pop psychiatrist in the Dr. Joyce Brothers vein is Debbie Harry, previously known primarily as the lead singer of the rock group Blondie. Although she has had parts in one small budget independent film *(Union City)* and a major studio effort *(Roadie)*, her portrayal of closet masochist Nicki Brand is sure to stir much controversy.

The artist with the responsibility of making the film's many scenes of violence come alive is Rick Baker, perhaps the most talented figure in special effects circles. It's he who made the ugly as well as the miraculous occur in *Videodrome*, work which ranged from devising realistic flesh wounds to giving machines the unnerving illusion of life.

As a result, *Videodrome* promises to be a gripping fable of the madness of which the media are capable. Whether or not it becomes prophetic of how TV entertainment, from prime time offerings to videogames, can run our lives is up to us.

Max loves television. Nickie loves more physical kinds of entertainment. In* Videodrome, *they are able to combine their individual affections with eye-opening, often brutal results. Like all of the motion pictures of director David Cronenberg,* Videodrome *is not a film for moviegoers with weak stomachs. But those who look past the vivid graphics will find a provocative message from the filmmaker.

conquering

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Object

New York City is at the mercy of the Green Goblin!

The costumed evildoer has decided to destroy the metropolis building-by-building and, astride his jet-propelled broomstick, he has placed super-bombs atop some of the city's most majestic skyscrapers.

Only one individual can stop the mad genius, and that's Peter Parker — also known as the Amazing Spider-man.

As a high school student, Parker was bitten by a radioactive spider thus inheriting the proportionate strength and abilities of an arachnid.

Abetted by web fluid of his own invention, Spider-man must spin super-strong strands of webbing and scale the boobytrapped buildings from the outside. His mission: reach the top of each edifice and defuse the super-bombs before they go off.

Ah, but his task is complicated by the presence of troublesome thugs and the nefarious, airborne Green Goblin himself — all of whom dog his way and try to cut his webbing.

What's more, the Goblin has blockaded Spider-man's path with a series of time bombs at various levels of each building.

Variations

There are six different games in each Atari-compatible cartridge: easy, medium, and difficult versions for either one player or two alternating videogamers.

The difficulty switch does not affect the *Spider-man* videogame.

Scoring

Points are granted whenever Spider-man passes his body across a criminal, a time bomb, or the sizzling core of the superbomb.

The point values are as follows:

Criminals:
30 points

Black time bombs:
50 points

Red time bombs:
80 points

Superbomb:
Double the points scored on that particular building — *not* on all *previous* buildings combined.

In addition, small supplemental doses of web fluid are awarded for each thug Spider-man apprehends and each time bomb he defuses. Stopping the superbomb fills your webshooter to the brim.

The player begins each game with three Spider-mans, and can only lose one if the superbomb detonates or a webless Spidey hits the pavement.

An additional wallcrawler is granted for every ten thousands points you score.

Control

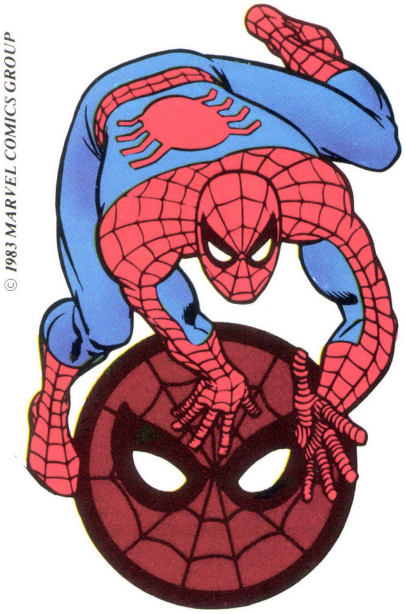
Spider-man is a joystick game.

The action button fires the webbing, extending it a full two-inches vertically or three and one-half inches diagonally, or allowing you to stop it anywhere there-along.

If you have extended a strand of webbing and decide to move in another direction, depressing and releasing the action button a second time *cancels* the web. Spider-man will cling to the wall wherever he happens to be.

The joystick serves two functions: it guides the direction of the web and, held in that position, it sends Spider-man on his way, swinging or hanging on the strand until he reaches the end or you cancel it.

Pushing the joystick forward will signal the strand to ascend vertically. Moving it left or right will shoot the webbing at a forty-five degree angle toward the top. You cannot fire webbing *downward.* To descend, you must pull



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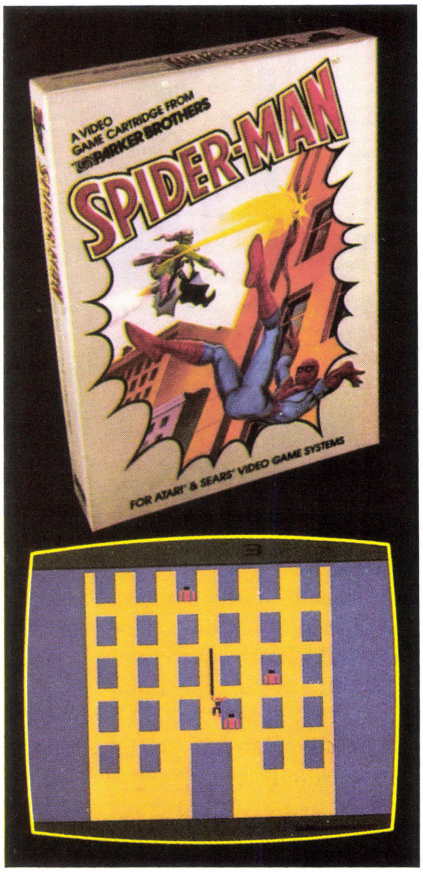
the joystick toward you, then depress the action button. Spider-man will drop straight down. Unlike the real Spider-man, this superhero cannot move groundward at an angle.

Spider-man also cannot move from side-to-side, per se. However, this maneuver can be accomplished two ways: with short, diagonal bursts of webbing — which takes a long time but is vital for minor adjustments in his vertical course, especially in the gray level — or spinning a long diagonal web, allowing Spidey to swing in



that direction and pressing the action button when he crosses the location you desire. The button will cause the webbing to vanish, leaving Spider-man at the desired spot on the wall.

Patterns

As Spider-man climbs, the building will scroll past. Each edifice comprises many screens on-end. Although some skyscrapers are taller than others, the fundamental structure is that of a building topped by a high voltage tower.

The superbomb is always located on a platform at the top of each girdered tower. There is always a ten-second warning siren before it goes off; the siren is activated not by time-passed but when Spider-man has gathered a certain number of points.

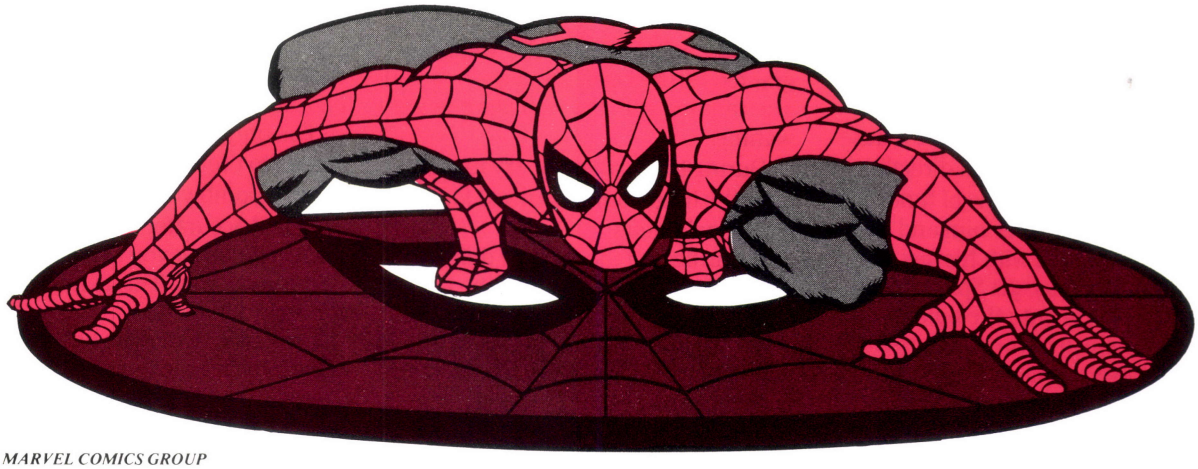
If you acquire at least three hundred points in criminals, the superbomb countdown will begin. If you get a minimum of 350-400 points of bombs and criminals mixed, the bomb starts to tick. If you go the difficult route, romping among the narrow girders, you're allowed at least seven hundred points solely in time bombs before the superbomb begins its doomsday cycle.

Keep an eye on the score: if you're not on the high voltage tower when the thirteen-second countdown begins, you've no chance to stop the superbomb from exploding.

The time bombs are scattered on stands throughout the girders, never on the building proper. These platforms are in relatively neat, vertical lines, though every platform is not always filled. The bombs are black for approximately five seconds once they appear on the screen. After that, they turn red for five seconds more before exploding. The black-to-red, red-to-blast cycles are put on hold by the game if Spidey climbs or drops and the time bomb goes off-screen until its ticking can no longer be heard.

The stomping ground of the Green Goblin varies from level to level, though he is always in the same place each time you reach that level. At all levels, he moves from side to side. In the easiest level, he does so only at the story on which he's placed the superbomb. As you progress to more taxing stages of play, you'll find the Green Goblin sliding back and forth at various points along Spider-man's climb.

The non-superpowered criminals only appear in the skyscraper windows. For all practical purposes, these



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sleazy characters appear at random. Though their patterns *are* to a degree predictable, this knowledge does the player virtually no good. A few opening gambits are suggested below. However, your web placement and strand length will vary from game to game, making it impossible to snare the felons in a clockwork fashion. Too, if you happen to fall to a lower story, it's easier just to eyeball the thugs than to try and figure out where in the pattern you are.

Conquering *Spider-man* rests largely in your ability to maneuver the wall-crawler. Thus, after the opening moves which will net you three or four criminals, you had best play the hoods as the game situation demands.

Always keep in mind that there is one irrevocable pattern: if the web fluid runs out, Spidey loses his grip on the building and takes a quick trip to the bottom.

Strategies

The hazards Spider-man faces all boil down to two facts of life: if the superbomb goes off the Spider-man-in-use perishes; and if his webbing is cut, he drops toward the street.

The webbing is vulnerable if a bomb explodes when Spidey is near, or if any of the villains gets between Spidey's web and the wall. Whether the web is in the process of being extended, or, in swinging, it happens to cross a window into which a villain suddenly pops, the strand will snap and our hero plummets earthward.

The Green Goblin and the roiling core of the superbomb will automatically cause the wall-crawler to take a dive if his webbing touches them.

The only way to save young Mr. Parker from an ear-grating splat is a fresh strand of webbing. He is perfectly capable of firing as he falls earthward; getting a grip on a wall or girder will be discussed in a moment.

The webshooter *itself* has two weaknesses. First, the web fluid is limited. This is especially detrimental in the more difficult levels of play, as the fluid runs out faster and will affect your strategy as detailed below. Second, the strands will only reach a short distance, and the end of each *must* touch a portion of the building or high voltage tower. Webbing will not stick to sky, windows, criminals, the Goblin, or any bomb.

The strategies which apply to the more challenging levels of the *easy* version are also valid for the early levels of the *difficult* edition.

Easy Screens

In general, the easy way to get villains is by allowing Spidey's arm to overlap a window and move him straight up and down, like a red and blue vacuum cleaner. But that wastes a lot of webbing and won't work with the bomb tower.

Play the first three buildings nearly the same. The only difference is that time becomes more critical on each successive level, as the web fluid drains more rapidly.

Start moving Spider-man even while the introductory music is playing. Shoot a strand straight up, level with the top of the second window above the door. To your left is a thug. Fire a strand to the left of the window *above* him, half-way up the side, swing over and take out that thug. On the backswing, extend the webbing to its fullest and nab the felon in the window to the top right of the door. If you miss him, keep swinging: he pops up momentarily in the second window from the left of that row.

One or two criminals will usually appear in the leftmost bank of windows. Shoot to the frame of the window between the window of the lower thug and the window above him. Grab the ne'er-do-well on your diagonal swing, then freeze your Spider-man on the wall to the *right* of the window, so that his left arm overlaps it. Shoot straight up to the next figure, ascend, and grab him.

Get into the center of the building and arrest the wrong-doers until you have 270 points worth. Don't do this by swinging idly back and forth: the villains have a sixth sense about Spider-man and tend to avoid wherever his body happens to be. The only way to trick them is by swinging on a very short strand and, if a villain happens to appear in the vicinity, quickly extending your web to swallow them up. It's best, however, to chase them down the instant they appear in a window.

In later levels, when web fluid is precious, you have no choice but to site your quarry and go after him. In these difficult levels, if the felon isn't a window or two away in any direction, don't bother: they're not worth the lost webbing. Besides, they won't be as cooperative as they were in the early levels, when they lingered up to five seconds. You'll be lucky to get them to sit still for *half* that time in the gray building and beyond.

When your quota of thugs is filled, prowl about the girders snapping up time bombs until the superbomb signals that it's near to explosion. Scoot up the structure and deactivate it. This is not as easy as it sounds.

The snaring of time bombs is accomplished by nicking them with Spider-man's arm as he ascends vertically (see below) or else by swinging across them. If you can't web past a bomb because it's smack over your head, and the girder is too narrow to chance slipping while making a minor adjustment to the left or right, go to the outside then web to the beam or the block directly *above* the time

bomb. Your subsequent swing will carry you right over it.

If you reach the superbomb and have some web fluid left, don't defuse it yet. Get your Spider-man directly above the left or right row of time bomb platforms. Lower him and take out the time bombs with his feet. If there *are* no bombs, get Spider-man off the tower and onto the building. When you return to the tower, there will be a fresh supply of time bombs.

Stopping the superbomb is easily accomplished in one of two manners, regardless of the level of play. You can't shoot *through* it, of course, so you must either lay your web parallel to the core, so that Spidey's arm brushes it and stops it; or else approach it with a "V" maneuver, firing *away* from it, then turning and firing back so that your web fastens on the shell, over the top-center of the core. As you reel Spidey in, his body will pass over the core and stop the explosion.

A third tactic is a trifle dicier: fixing the web at a point anywhere on the bomb shell *above* the core and swinging Spider-man into contact with the core. The problem is that the Goblin will be passing back and forth below him. If, in the arc of his swing, Spidey brushes the Goblin, all your efforts will end with a one way ticket to oblivion. The Goblin does not take prisoners.

Difficult Screens

Your troubles really begin with the gray screen, which is a *short* tower: few criminals, a pesky Goblin, and a superquick loss of web fluid.

On this level, it is imperative that you add to your stores of fluid as you climb. This is best done by corking the time bombs.

To get to the bombs efficiently *and* replenishing web fluid at the same time, cut a course to the left of the screen, taking out the first two criminals you encounter. Do this with a diagonal swing, short ascent, diagonal swing. Then, with a short "thwip" of fluid, grab the wall above the center of the window in the second row from the left. Using the big blocks which are suspended between each story of the high voltage tower — the platforms on which the time bombs are poised — ascend straight up, knocking out the bombs one after another. Some minor adjustments left or right might be necessary.

You aren't going to reach the top of the tower without the extra webbing granted by the bombs: even when you are standing still, the web allotment is waning.

During this maneuver, try to wait until the time bombs turn red for the additional points.

Regardless of the level or difficulty, whenever you must go past the Green Goblin on the high voltage tower, web diagonally *away* from the direction in which he's moving. Because the tower is not as broad as the building, he bobs rather quickly from side-to-side. This diagonal approach will give you extra time to haul Spidey up before the Goblin's return sweep.

The Fall

You can be a brilliant *Spider-man* player, but at *some* point you're going to slip. It may not be your fault: a thug may pop up in a window as your web happens to be in the neighborhood.

Short strands are best to break your fall: you can place them with precision, and they take less time to discharge. If you miss one short strand, there's usually the opportunity to get off a second.

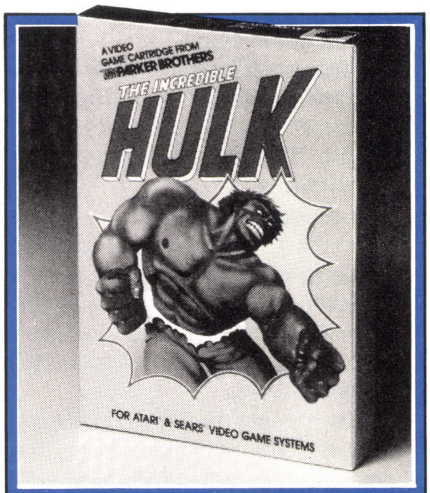
The only reason to shoot a long thread to break a fall is if you see a thug or bomb you want. If you shoot long and accurately, your subsequent swing can bring you across the object and earn points. This is not suggested for novice players.

Obviously, the walls between the windows and the time bomb platforms are your best targets because they're your biggest targets.

Incidentally, if you happen to fall from the tower, and web fluid is not a consideration, you might as well allow yourself to fall all the way to the building proper. You can grab a few criminals on your way up, and a whole new set of bombs will have appeared when you reach the tower.

One rule you should follow above all: if the superbomb detonator sounds and you're just beginning your ascent up the tower, *stay to the* center *blocks*. There are never any bombs here. If you go up the left or right side and find a time bomb over your head, you *can't* go through it and time is wasted going around it. Go to the side *only* if you're afraid you'll be short of fluid to reach the top and want to "juice up" on the time bombs.

If the siren goes off and you've no chance to make it to the top, just go about your business collecting thugs until the denouement. Better to pragmatically take the points than make a futile race against the clock.



Another phenomenally popular Marvel Comics character, *The Incredible Hulk*, will be joining Spider-man on the videogame shelf this June.

Though Parker Brothers has not yet created a narrative, the game will feature events which, in angering Dr. Bruce Banner — a victim of gamma radiation — trigger his emotion-charged transformation into what Stan Lee calls "the Jolly Green Goliath."

Parker Brothers is said to be working especially hard on making the animation of the videogame Incredible Hulk as fluid as possible in order to "capture the look and excitement of NBC's Saturday morning cartoon series."

Comment

Licensed characters seem to bring out the best in game designers. Doubtless they are "inspired" by having the licensor look over their shoulders, making sure the game is faithful to the character in question.

Not only is Parker Brothers' *Spider-man* true to its roots — the music even suggests the TV cartoon theme — it is a novel and challenging game. The variations of attack which a player can evolve — ie, go after the bombs, thugs, or some combination thereof — make for a different experience each time you play.

Like *Superman* from Atari, there is nothing on the market quite like *Spider-man*. It is an exciting game for kids — although young children will probably expend all their Spider-man figures on the first building — but it's a whopper of an adventure for adults.

Stan Lee entertains friends in his Hollywood home.

STAN LEE: THE MAN BEHIND SPIDER-MAN

Spider-man was created just over two decades ago, making his debut in the fifteenth issue of *Amazing Fantasy.* Today, a copy of that Marvel Comics magazine — which sold for a mere dime in August of 1962 — lists for one thousand dollars.

Spider-man has grown to rival such stalwarts as Superman and Batman for the crown of the world's most popular superhero.

The reason? Spider-man/Peter Parker was the first superhero with all the neuroses of an average, everyday youth. He had acne, he had girl trouble, he couldn't cash checks made out to 'Spider-man'; the fact that he tangled with such fellows as the eight-armed Doctor Octopus, the Lizard, the Kingpin, and the Green Goblin was sometimes incidental to the slice-of-teen-life soap operas invented by Spider-man's creator, writer/editor Stan Lee.

Lee, who also dreamt up the Fantastic Four, Iron Man, the Mighty Thor, the Silver Surfer, and the subject of the next Parker Brothers-Marvel teamup, the Incredible Hulk, is currently the head of Marvel Productions, a Hollywood-based studio which creates the Spider-man TV cartoons among other TV programs. Lee recently reminisced about the birth of his brainchild.

"I was really trying to think of a superhero that hadn't been done before," he told *Videogaming Illustrated.* "There were already characters who had super-strength, super-speed, and so on. The only thing I didn't know of any character doing was crawling on walls. I thought, 'Wouldn't it be fun to get one who could behave like an insect?'

"So I thought about what *kind* of insect. I could have made him 'Mosquito-man' or 'Gnat-man' or 'Moth-man' because I really wanted to experiment. That was going to be the last issue of *Amazing Fantasy,* which was selling very poorly; there was nothing to lose.

"Anyway, when I was a kid, there used to be a pulp magazine called *The Spider: Master of Men.* I always liked that name, so I decided to call this new character 'Spider-man.'"

The sales of *Amazing Fantasy*'s last issue went through the roof, and Spider-man was given his own magazine in March of the following year. The rest, as they say, is history.

As for the Green Goblin, one of Spidey's earliest and most persistent nemesis, Lee says, "When thinking up villains, you're always trying to come up with something different. I was going over a lot of words in my mind and I hit on the word 'goblin,' which I didn't think that had ever been used for a villain.

"I always liked coming up with names that were alliterative, so Goblin alone just didn't seem enough. 'Great,' 'Gooey,' and 'Goofy' Goblin just didn't have a ring to them. Green Goblin did."

Lee, who continued to shepherd his brainchild through ten years of monthly adventures before turning over the narrative chores to less inspired scribes, is delighted with the wallcrawler's videogame incarnation.

"I love it," he gushes, "it's really charming — though I'm not very good at it. I *still* can't get him to the top of even the first building. Actually, I get him there, but he always falls down."

Lee believes that seasoned videogamers will fare better than he, and he hopes that Spidey's tilt with the Green Goblin will be the first of many Marvel-inspired videogames.

(Note: see *Videogaming Illustrated* #1 for more on the Marvel-Parker Brothers product scenario.)

Object

The megalomaniacal Master Control Program runs the computer world without mercy or compassion. He forces its denizens to war against one another on the videogame grid — though none of the MCP's vicious Warriors is the match of Tron.

Tron! The would-be savior of the computer world. A creation of programmer Alan Bradley, Tron was originally written to destroy the stranglehold of the evil MCP. But the MCP has captured Tron and is forcing him to fight for his electronic life on the grid.

Using his powerful Identity Disc, Tron must defeat a multitude of ruthless enemies. . . .

Variations

There is only the one game in this Intellivision-compatible cartridge, though you can play it at "Slow," "Slower," or "Slowest" speeds. This determines how fast Warriors and their Discs move.

In all three versions, Tron battles an assortment of Warriors. There are Normals (light blue), Bulldogs (purple), Leaders (dark blue), Guards (orange), plus Paralyzer Probes and the awesome Recognizers.

Regardless of the level, the game speeds up and Warriors become tougher as time passes, but there are no variations to the basic contest.

Scoring

Points are won by derezzing (ie, obliterating) Warriors or Recognizers (Paralyzer Probes cannot be harmed), or by using the Identity Disc to destroy the Discs of other warriors.

One strike from Tron's Disc kills all except for the Bulldogs: you've got to strike them twice within five seconds, or the first hit is "healed."

The point system is fairly complex: in essence, you are awarded fifty to five thousand points per block or derez, depending upon how many points you have accumulated to that stage of the game. An award five-times the current value of a Warrior is given for clearing the board, a ten-times Warrior value awarded for knocking out a Recognizer.

Players only have one Tron per game, but he can stand three hits from enemy Discs per wave before derezzing. When the player accumulates twenty thousands points, Tron can take four hits, and at one hundred thousand points, the computerworld rebel can stand five strikes.

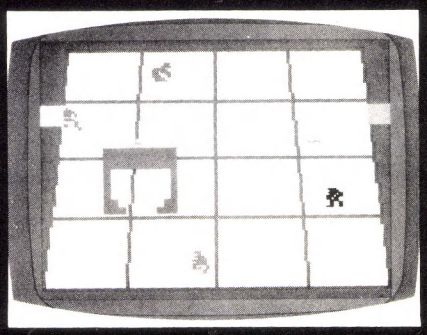
Tron can recover from hits by teleporting (see below). The player does not lose points when Tron is hit with a Disc.

Control

Tron is played with the Intellivision keypad. There is an overlay, which the player is advised to discard: it gets in the way, especially if you press hard in the heat of battle and dislodge it, thus disorienting yourself.

Play by the numbers. The keys toss the Disc as follows:

Key 1: upper left
Key 2: straight up
Key 3: upper right
Key 4: left
Key 6: right
Key 7: lower left
Key 8: down
Key 9: lower right



A representative screen showing the grid, Tron, rival warriors, doorways, and the Recognizer.

Key 5, depressed, puts you in the block mode. You can't perform this function unless Tron is holding his Disc, nor can you throw the Disc when this defensive tactic is engaged. Pressing the key a second time returns you to mobile play.

If you throw a Disc and miss, though it will return automatically, pressing any key will cause it to cancel and return at once. To this end, don't put your restless firing finger on a new key until a previous shot has hit its mark. You don't want to slip and recall the Disc prematurely.

The keypad disc moves Tron around the game grid, except in the block mode. During blocking, it controls the location of Tron's Disc, allowing him to use it as a shield against incoming Discs.

The action buttons on the side of the keypad serve no function.

The instruction booklet suggests playing with two keypads; that really isn't necessary. Without the overlay, you'll quickly get the feel of where the keys are and jump to them as though touch-typing.

Patterns

Each new wave consists of three Warriors, all Normals until the ten thousand point plateau. Leaders emerge at ten thousand points, Bulldogs at fifteen thousand, Guards at one million.

Destroyed Warriors and Discs come back into play after ten to twenty-five second intervals (depending upon your skill level) unless the wave is entirely destroyed. At that point, a new set of Warriors appears almost at once.

Tron always begins the game in the center.

The Guards always begin a wave by emerging from the same side. However, there is no predicting from *which* side they will emerge. This is also true for the Recognizer, although it never emerges from the bottom.

A Recognizer will only appear between certain Warrior waves, setting forth upon a command from the MCP to shoot its disheartening black beam at jammed doors situated such that they allow Tron to Warp (see below).

Strategies

Warriors

The critical strategies to surviving in *Tron: Deadly Discs* are to keep on the move, and to continually jam doors.

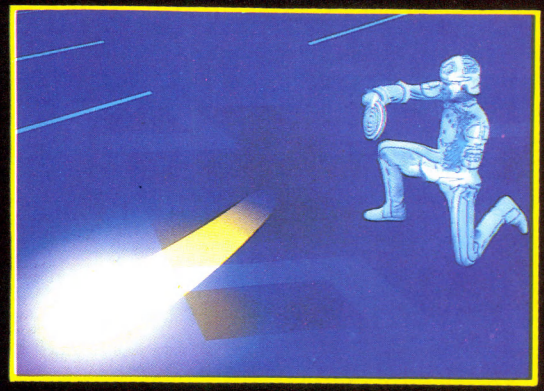
On the first point, if Tron doesn't have his Disc in-hand, the blocking mode button will only make Tron duck. He doesn't duck deep enough to make this a really valuable strategy — and, besides, it leaves him a sitting duck. Better to run.

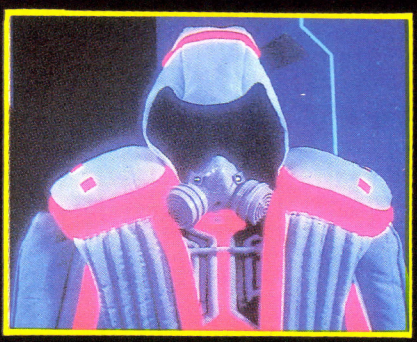
As for jamming, that's accomplished by flinging Tron's Disc into any of the doors from which a Warrior entered, or by physically moving Tron's body into the doorway (his Disc needn't be in-hand for this). You can also pass through a door you previously jammed to an unjammed door on the opposite side, thus jamming it.

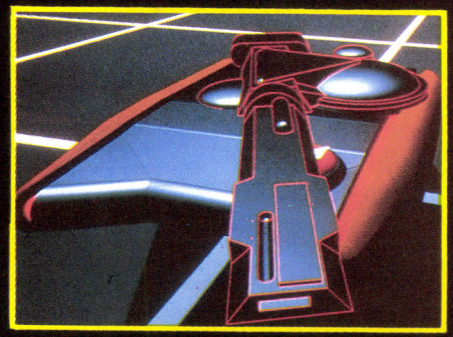
The doors stay open for as long as the Warrior is in-play, and for five seconds after he has derezzed. Jamming two doors exactly opposite one another provides Warp capability. Tron can then enter one side and exit the other at will, at the same time regaining one of his "lives" during each passage.

conquering: TRON

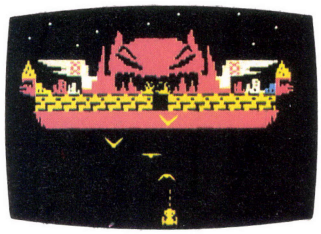
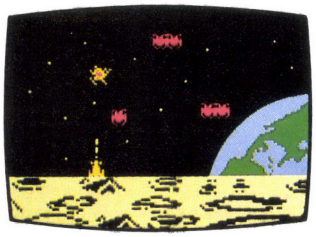
deadly discs

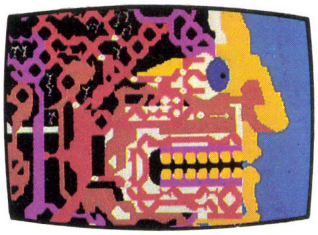
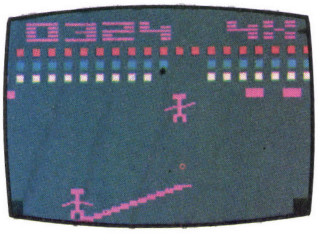
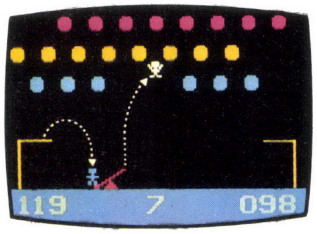


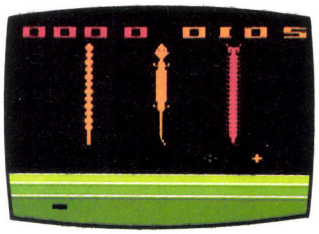
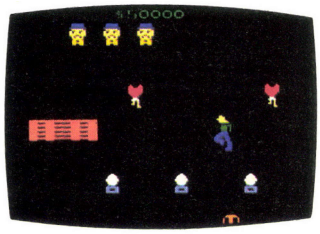
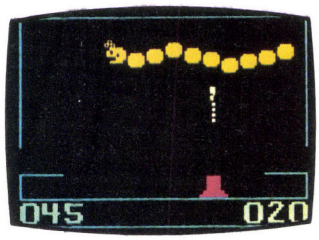




How to survive when the chips are down ... your neck.

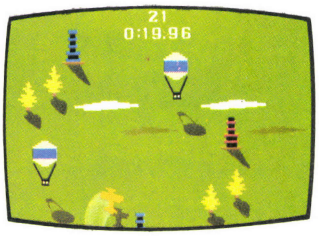



preview

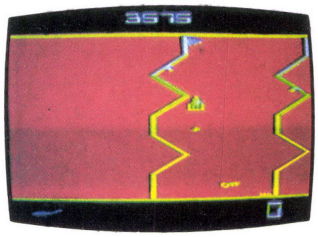
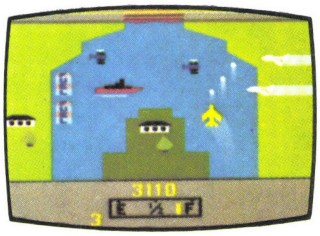
A critical rundown of the best and the worst of the newest videogame releases.

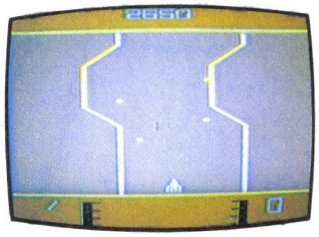


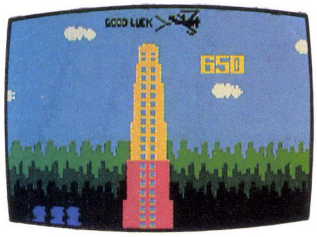
This issue marks the permanent expansion of our Preview section. Hitherto, we've given you one page of brief comments about recently released games; henceforth, we'll be looking at dozens of games each issue, in as much detail as the cartridges warrant.

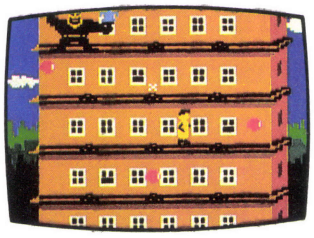
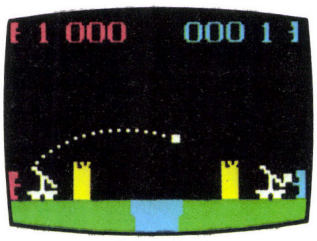
Since one person's gold is another's dross, we've opted to send Preview along the route popularized by movie critics Siskel and Ebert. Each issue, *Videogaming Illustrated* will be offering *two* opinions of each game, written by staffers E.C. Meade and Jim Clark.

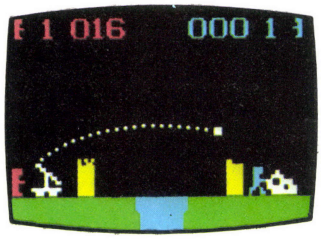
We open this issue with a trio of Intellivision-compatible games from Imagic — games which prove that Mr. Clark and Ms. Meade have somewhat differing views of videogaming.

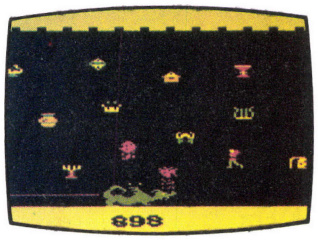
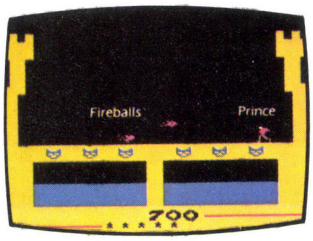



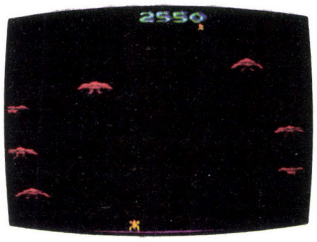


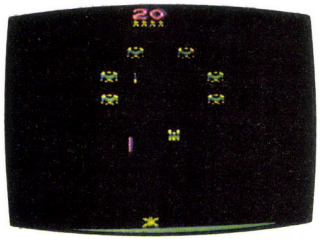








Screens from a few of the videogames covered in this issue's "Preview." Top row, from left: the Intellivision **Demon Attack** *and* **Microsurgeon**. *Below that, from left:* **Circus Atari** *and* **P.T. Barnum's Acrobats, Bugs,** *and* **Journey/Escape**. *Next:* **Sid the Spellbinder,** *and* **Skyjinks**. *Below* **Sid,** *twin screens from* **Fantastic Voyage**. *Below* **Skyjinks, River Raid** *and* **Bermuda Triangle**. *Next row, from left: two screens from* **Beauty and the Beast** *and* **Smithereens,** *the latter with a wrecked catapult. Finally, two screens from* **Dragonfire** *and two from* **Phoenix**.

Microsurgeon

Object

The player guides a microscopic robot probe through a disease-ridden human body. Therein, the surrogate surgeon must destroy viruses, bacteria, tumors, tar deposits, gall and kidney stones, tapeworms, and cholesterol buildup in different areas of the body.

The probe has a limited amount of power, which is drained by dispensing aspirin, antibiotics, or ultrasonic rays. The probe has power restored to it with every ailment it kills.

The screen scrolls to show, in mock-detail, the veins, glands, and organs of the patient from the waist-up. The player can get a status report of the patient's improving or deteriorating condition by depressing a button to summon up a "chart."

JC: I love *Microsurgeon.* It's endlessly clever: I especially like the realistic touch of being attacked from time-to-time by the body's own defenses. The notion of awarding the player-surgeon in dollars rather than points (on the chart) is also inspired.

The graphics and sound effects are evocative of the theme, though I think a *Zaxxon*-like approach to a limited section of the body would have been somewhat more effective. I'd like to have seen the beating of the heart, or maybe the shadow of our craft and the tiny "invaders" as they pass over the organs. As it is, though extremely colorful, the game fails to create a sense of *awe* at being inside the human body.

However, *Microsurgeon* is a videogame, not a biology lesson. And as a game, it's superb. There are a lot of quick decisions to make regarding where to go and by which system — circulatory, lymphatic, etc. Also appealing is the fact that there are not only the local enemies to shoot, but the player must worry about the deterioration of the entire system. That kind of multi-level theme, previously used in *Space Battle,* gives an added dimension and sense of urgency to the game.

This is a game for the player who enjoys a challenge — and who would like to show the unenlightened that the medium is more than spaceships and gobblers.

ECM: I agree that *Microsurgeon* is a wonderful game, though I feel that Jim's comments about the graphics are misguided. Imagic wanted to entertain players, not gross them out. If you want gizzards, go to the butchershop.

I've little to add to Jim's evaluation, other than to state that I found the Intellivision controls comparatively easy to use in this game. You don't have to look down constantly to see which button dispenses aspirin and which brings up the chart: these are conveniently placed, and easy to use in a pinch.

I congratulate Imagic for a theme well-executed. (I also commend them for an instruction booklet which has wit, substance and style. This is one area in which Imagic has the other companies beat.)

Demon Attack

Object

The Intellivision edition of Imagic's popular Atari-compatible game pits your moon-based Laser Cannon against four different kinds of alien demons: Winged Warriors, Tentacled Terrorists, Bound Bombers, and Suicide Patrollers. Each dispenses different kinds of projectiles, including Jagged Juggernauts which explode and scatter shrapnel.

There are three different versions: single player, alternating player, and co-op in which control of the Laser Cannon shifts from player to player every four seconds.

ECM: If you like *Astrosmash,* you'll worship *Demon Attack.* The keypad permits you to slide and shoot with the same uncomplicated ease and, as in *Astrosmash,* you're constantly shooting at *something.* I just happen to prefer the bobbing, soaring demons of this game to the vertically tumbling debris of the other.

The graphics are merely functional — until you've done away with the first three waves. That's when your Laser Cannon blasts off for an airborne assault against the Demon space base Pandemonium. The ship is truly inspired. After you beat Pandemonium with well-placed shots through the moving Window of Vulnerability, you fly past a wonderfully sketched earth, back to the moon. The second and subsequent waves will keep you on your toes.

For me, the lurking presence of Pandemonium gives this game real character and, musically, I especially loved the way the game served up a few bars of Mussorgsky's *Night On Bald Mountain* as the Cannon roared skyward.

I offer you *Demon Attack* with my highest rating.

JC: While I agree that this is an effective and entertaining game, one which you'll spend a long time mastering, I think it could have been improved.

In short, I happen to like the relentless ranks of *Space Invaders* and the dive-bomber creatures of *Galaxian* far more: because those enemies are more structured, there's a chance to employ some real strategy against them. Playing *Demon Attack,* I found myself hiding in one corner or the other, slipping out for the kill and then ducking back.

I also prefer the consistency of the aforementioned games: the tactics of your enemy don't change, they merely become more difficult. That, too, encourages masterable "approaches" to the games.

However, I may be overstating my case against the random nature of *Demon Attack.* As EC says, it takes a long time to master, and many videogamers I know find orderliness in this type of game a bore.

Of the *Astrosmash — Threshold — Space Chase* school, I'd have to say that this is one of the best. I also agree that the demon motif is a gem, though I think Imagic missed a bet not carrying the theme into the projectiles, ie using fireballs and showers of brimstone as weapons.

Beauty and the Beast

Object

Horrible Hank has run to the top of the Mutton Building with Tiny Mabel; fortunately, Bashful Buford is in pursuit. Buford must climb to the top of the building moving from ledge-to-ledge, the windows opening and closing — on his fingers — rather quickly. Grab a closed window and Buford falls; he also falls by wandering too close to either side of the building.

The other dangers are boulders flung by Hank which break into equally deadly halves in later levels, bats and birds which knock Buford down, and rats which trip him up. He can jump these or flee, or wait until Mabel *also* sends something down — her heart. Each time our hero catches a thrown beast he earns points and the fleeting ability to decimate Hank's obstacles for points.

After eleven virtually identical screens, four floors in each, Buford reaches the top of the building and Hank plummets to the bottom. The game starts again at a more difficult level.

JC: The first time I played this game I thought I was pretty hot stuff. I made it all the way to the top of the building with one Buford, amassing five more and stopping to collect a lot of points on each story; there just wasn't enough to hold my interest. Still, I decided to give the game a chance and play the second level — and lost my accumulated Bufords in fifteen seconds flat.

Beauty and the Beast suckers you in with its seeming simplicity. It forces you to develop real strategies, such as when to go for an open window, whether you can dash for a heart before an oncoming bird drops to the level of your head, when to jump or run, etc.

In short, this is *not* just another "climbing" game of the *Donkey Kong - Crazy Climber* school. To be sure, there are elements of both; however, they are expressed in a manner which is becoming distinctly "Imagic". That is, graphic or character bits which are extraneous to the bare-bones game but make all the difference in one's enjoyment of it. The "heart" gimmick, for instance, actually creates a bind between Buford and Mabel, and I like that. She doesn't seem so much like window dressing, as the girl in *Donkey Kong*. I also like the cheer the lovers give when they're reunited atop the building.

The graphics are excellent, particularly when Hank takes a tumble and the whole screen shakes.

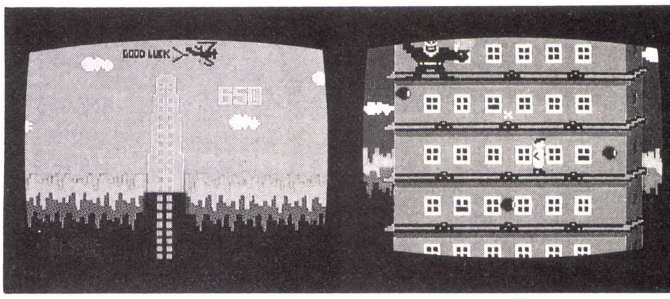
ECM: I don't share Jim's enthusiasm for this cartridge. I'll allow that Imagic's stamp on the characters and design are endearing, but that's not going to hold a videogamer's attention once she or he has mastered the cartridge.

While Imagic has concocted some unusual nemeses for Buford, each with its own m.o., the trouble is they they're too tame and predictable. Even when boulders are flying fast and furious, gameplay is still sort of slow. Not to dwell on *Astrosmash*, but when *those* rocks split there's a sense of calamity; when *these* boulders break, you just slide to safety on another part of the ledge. If there's something in the way, you jump it. If there's a heart you catch it, an open window you climb it.

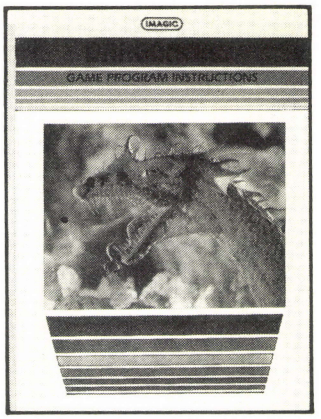
Everything is too pat. And knowing that there's always the "out" of ending the wave by going to the top — which is easy to do in most cases — doesn't help matters. Maybe a time limit would have improved the game, or else the peril of Mabel dangling on a ledge and taking a spill instead of Buford. Something to create the semblance of danger rather than simply imminent pratfall.

Though I give *Beauty and the Beast* thumbs down for me, I must objectively recommend it to people who must own a climbing game and have to choose between this or the Intellivision-compatible *Donkey Kong*.

It will be interesting to see if Hank shakes up the marketplace in a comparable manner. I think he will.



The two faces of Imagic's Intellivision-compatible* Beauty and the Beast. *In the first screen, Horrible Hank holds Mabel aloft. In the second, the Mutton Building is visible, and the biplane which rescues them at the end of the game.



Dragonfire

Object

A herd of dragons has driven the royal court from the castle. There, they have commandeered the many treasures stored in different parts of the king's edifice. You, as a bold prince — and aspirant to the hand of his daughter — must reach each room by crossing a drawbridge, jumping and ducking fireballs spewed forth by the dragon.

Surviving the bridge, you run around each treasure room collecting goblets, crowns, diamonds, candelabras, and other goods. All the while the dragon paces below, spitting fire up at you. Each successive dragon is quicker, smarter, and angrier than the one before it, but fear not: you have seven princes to save the day.

There are two versions of *Dragonfire*, one for the Atari 2600 and another for Intellivision. The Intellivision edition adds a bowman and arrows to the hazards of crossing each bridge.

ECM: This is a very original set of cartridges from Imagic, though I prefer the 2600 edition. It's easier to duck and jump the fireballs, and to run around the treasure chambers, using the joystick controller.

In the medieval milieu, I still think Atari's *Adventure* is the best of the dragon-and-castle games. The graphics are nothing to

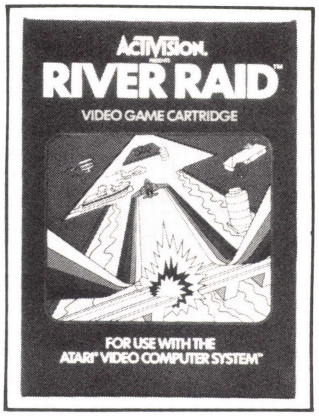
write home about, but the mazes, the precocious trio of dragons, the meddlesome bat, the wandering bridge, and that glistening grail still entertain me after two years of play.

But *Dragonfire* is going to keep you on the move. If it hasn't the scope of *Adventure,* it also doesn't have any "merciful" levels: if that ole hand-eye coordination isn't *just so,* you're gonna die. Those seven princes will go up in smoke a lot faster than you think.

The graphics are simple, even in the Intellivision version, though I didn't find that bothersome. *Dragonfire* puts all its efforts into gameplay. The only complaint I have pertains to the sound effects: they could have been a little more awesome. The fire doesn't really crackle, and the dragon doesn't really *boom* — simple enough things to achieve which would have given the game much more power.

JC: Ominous sound effects would have been nice, but there's one thing *really* missing from this game: an enchanted shield. I like running and jumping around as much as the next player, but that seems anachronistic here. It's the kind of move we've grown accustomed to making against barrels and rolling logs, not dragons. The capacity to block a limited number of fireballs would have made this game perfect, bringing it closer in spirit to the classic tales of dragon-slaying.

But, *Dragonfire's* two editions are still well-worth owning. There are very few dual challenge games, that is cartridges which jump from a horizontal peril (fireballs shooting along the bridge) to a vertical one (the dragon's breath inside the treasure rooms). Quickly adjusting from one to the other can make you delightfully crazy.



River Raid

Object

You are the pilot of a jet, and your mission is to soar over an enemy river, destroying as many tankers, helicopters, fuel depots, jets and bridges as possible before your jet crashes or runs out of fuel.

There is a fuel gauge at the bottom of the screen: as you begin to run low, you have the option of flying over a depot instead of blasting it: for as long as you're above the repository, your tanks are slowly replenished.

The player begins each Atari 2600-compatible game with three jets, and is awarded an extra aircraft every ten thousand points.

ECM: This is my kind of game. Jim mentioned the "finger-prints" Imagic leaves on their creations: I prefer the Activision imprimatur. It means the pace is going to be fast, the subject exciting, and the graphics — well, these folks have milked things from the 2600 most people never thought were possible.

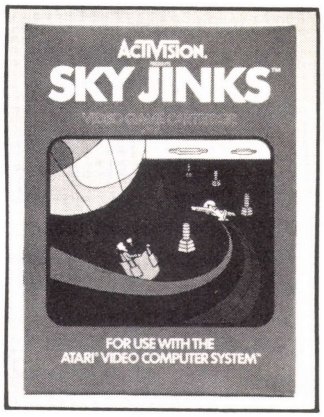
In fact, I find *River Raid* actually more enjoyable than ColecoVision's distractingly overdressed *Zaxxon.* You can slow your craft or speed it up, bank left or right, fire at will; I also like the way the targets move from side to side, making them difficult to hit and presenting the danger of collision.

I also salute the design of the river which, complete with tributaries, is masterful. You can't fly over land or you crash, so you *have* to follow the winding, often *very* narrow course of the river — a path which is often no wider than your wingspan. The player must be a crackerjack navigator as well as a dead-shot. This one's a winner.

JC: Activision has indeed come up with a top-notch game of this type, but I found it surprisingly flat after playing Intellivision's *B-17 Bomber.* Activision inarguably has worked wonders with the 2600, but *River Raid* is still limited to the one, basic, shoot-'em-up obstacle course. Yes, the convolutions are tricky; but unless you've a desperate need to keep your finger on the action button, blasting away at things, *River Raid* becomes redundant. There is no sense of pacing: it's one shot, one course correction, one potential collision after another.

Literature buff EC — as well as Activision — should take a lesson from Herman Melville. What impact would *Moby Dick* have had if the whale appeared on every page?

Having said this, if it's nonstop action you want I'll concede you can't do better than this cartridge. Compared to *River Raid, Zaxxon* is like an afternoon on the hammock. (Though I disagree that *Zaxxon* is "overdressed": it is more textured and sophisticated) I wish there were less shooting and more piloting. Some of the memory given over to those tortuous rivers and overbearing obstacles should have been used for an alternate, flyer's point-of-view screen of the approach to the bridge. Sighting and shooting out the underpinnings of each span would have provided some much-needed dimension to this game.



Sky Jinks

Object

Your mission is straightforward enough: fly a P41 through an obstacle course, avoiding trees, pylons, and balloons. One catch: to score points, you've got to pass to the right of the red pylons and the left of the blue ones. All the while the clock is running, recording your time for the run. Each crash costs time.

ECM: No doubt about it: the people at Activision produce the most consistently amazing games in the business. What's more amazing is that this game is basically a rehash of those awful, tacky skiing cartridges, where you've got to round the gates and trees as you travel downslope.

The difference is in the realism of *Sky Jinks.* The airplane casts a shadow on the terrain — yes, ala *Zaxxon* — but the swooping and angling of this vehicle, and its shadow, surpass the other *despite* the comparative sophistication of ColecoVision. It's a simple effect which will leave you breathless. The life-like nature of the game is further enhanced by the sound effects and throttle-like handling of the P41.

Then there's the placement of the obstacles themselves. It's no easy course, even at the simplest level. The fact that you can slow or accelerate your plane allows you to take things at your own speed and evolve

various approaches to the static or random courses.

Sky Jinks is virtuoso game-making.

JC: I'm equally impressed with *Sky Jinks,* though I do have a minor criticism. For all its ingenuity, Activision could have done more than disguise the old skiing format in a flight game. I'm not saying this was intentional, but it detracts from the novelty of gameplay nonetheless. (I also don't agree that the ski cartridges are all that awful, particularly Intellivision's *U.S. Ski Team Skiing.* But that's another story.)

My small complaint aside, Activision *has* put in all those wonderful twists E.C. mentioned, and done so with awesome results. I'm especially fond of how there's no second crack at the pylons, reminiscent of the Black Angus in *Stampede:* miss it and you don't get another chance.

It's not like having two and three shots at those cockamamie insects in *Bugs.* This is a game requiring quick reflexes and concentration.

Phoenix

Object

Bird-like creatures fly at your land-based battery, dipping and soaring while dropping flurries of bombs. As you slide back and forth along the ground, you have the option of either shooting the enemy out of the sky or protecting yourself with a force field.

After four waves of winged beasts have been destroyed, you must blast their parentship from the air by firing away its protective shield and placing a projectile through a revolving window beyond.

JC: This is the best arcade adaptation Atari has done for the 2600. The sound effects are all there, the force field works and looks just like it does in the arcade game, and although the parentship screen doesn't send out flocks of attackers, it's about the only major compromise I noticed here.

I was pleasantly surprised by the graphics, not usually an Atari home video strong point. This is particularly true with the larger (third and fourth wave) monsters. The animation of the wings and swooping of the airborne animals is excellent.

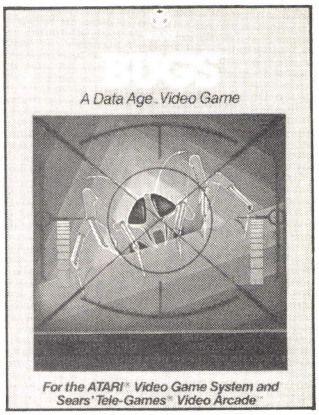
Phoenix proves that Atari *can* compete with Activision and Imagic graphicswise. Indeed, after *Phoenix* and their comparatively fine *Ms. Pac-Man* — which is infinitely better than *Pac-Man* and, again, surprisingly close to the arcade experience — I'm beginning to hold some real hope that 2600 arcade adaptations need not cause buffs to shudder.

ECM: Since Jim brought it up, I'd like to mention that I think *Ms. Pac-Man* is much better than *Phoenix,* not only as a faithful arcade replica, but as a challenge on its own.

Phoenix is, however, *a good* adaptation. The trouble with it is that the first, second, and fourth screens are too easy. I found that to be so with the arcade game, incidentally, so Atari is not to be faulted here. Though gameplay becomes more difficult in succeeding levels, the third and fourth waves are really the ones that give you your money's worth. Those winged giants are really something to battle — or just to watch.

On the whole, this game is better than the cartridges to which it is liable to be compared — such as *Demon Attack* and *Threshold* — though I found it much more exciting to play without the force field.

(For completists, Atari and Imagic, which had locked in a legal battle over alleged similarities between *Phoenix* and *Demon Attack,* have dropped their battle.)



Bugs

Object.

You're looking into reports of a life form detected on another planet. Passing through the Cosmic Tunnel, you encounter the Super-Bugs. These are giant insects which begin to slither from great subterranean colonies — along with the Phylax, Super-Drones which can gnaw through any substance.

You must direct your gunsight across the long, common mouth of the colonies, blasting the bugs before any can fully emerge and destroy you. During the course of battle, you must also draw the scuttling Phylax into your line of fire — for to touch the mutant is to die.

Each player has three lives at the beginning of each game.

JC: *Bugs* is a very good game for the Atari 2600. It's one of the initial offerings from Data Age, and though I'm not fond of the bulk of their games, this one is unique and endlessly enjoyable.

First, the bad news: the projectiles are dull and the sound effects tired. The good news: you won't care. Chasing those bugs as they creep forth will have you constantly on the move — particularly since each new wave is more difficult to stop than the last.

The *Missile Command*-like gunsight is appropriate here, though it would have been a greater challenge to hit the critters in the *heads.* Since they move out at different times, this would have enabled players to shuttle the sight about different levels of the screen instead of straight along the bottom.

No matter. The game is quick and very original. You'll have a great time.

ECM: Might as well speak my prejudices before getting on with this: for my money — and yours — you'd do as well to drag your old *Space Invaders* cartridge out of the mothballs. I don't think anyone has yet topped that cartridge in a slide-in-shoot format, not only in terms of the basic game but the many variations.

As for *Bugs,* it's fast, I can't deny that. And I had my hands full plugging the space insects. But there's a real problem here. Jim touched on it when he mentioned the projectiles: the gunsight and missiles are too *fat.* There's no streamlining here, no real precision work in the graphics or gameplay. If your shot is in the neighborhood, you'll nail the suckers.

The real risk element of the game are the Phylax mutants, and the anticipation of their attack is what provides the real suspense. Otherwise, *Bugs* would be no more than a *Space Cavern* variation. In fact, I must admit to liking that Apollo game much more.

Average of this kind, and not what it could have been. We hope Data Age doesn't take it perso

Continued on page 55

media preview

This issue we introduce another column, part of our effort to keep you abreast of what's new in videogaming-related fields.

The emphasis in "Media Preview" will be on what is new in videocassettes, videodiscs, and other software and hardware to use with your television. There will also be occasional pieces on technological or creative innovations which affect the media.

The inauguration of "Media Preview" will make it possible for us to devote our "Eye On" pages exclusively to videogaming news, yet not deprive those of our readers who have interests in such neighboring fields as music, movies, and TV.

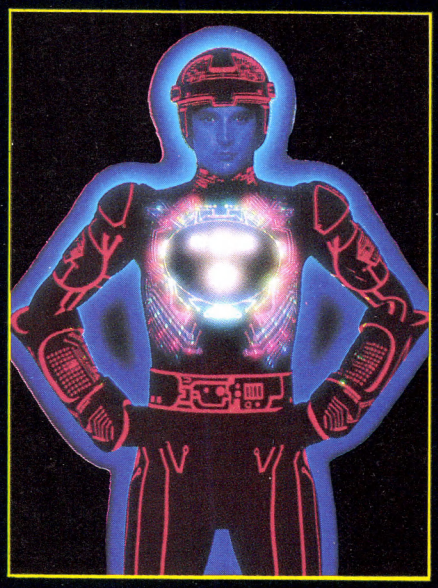
Novelty

For those of you who thrive on videocassette novelty, clear your library shelf — and the rest of the TV room, while you're at it — for the first homevideo "Smelly."

Some years back, theatres in major metropolitan areas presented a low-budget film entitled *Polyester* starring Tab Hunter. As an added box office draw, scents were piped through each theatre's air conditioning system to add another dimension to the on-screen action.

Well, now you can have *Polyester et* smells at home. Only now the movie is call *Odorama,* and it comes packaged with a "sniff card." All you have to do is scratch away appropriately marked sections of the card as the film progresses.

Whether or not the movie itself stinks is irrelevant.



Home Video

We've raved a great deal about the motion picture *Tron* in previous issues; no sense repeating the accolades here.

However, we are going to suggest that if you haven't seen the film, or if you are looking for a unique home video experience, you get yourself the *Tron* videotape, which was released by Walt Disney Home Video late last year.

The computer-generated graphics are still impressive, although they obviously lose some of their impact on a small screen. However, the stereo sound is the best-ever on a home videotape. The trebles are crisp, the bass ominous, and the stereo separation superb. It's well-worth the effort to wire your unit to a stereo tape/record system for this picture. (See issue #1 for details of this hookup)

Music

Walt Disney Productions has also created another instant-classic by re-recording the soundtrack of their 1940 animated film *Fantasia* in Dolby Sound.

The original music wasn't just rechanneled: every note was *re-performed,* including Mickey Mouse's voice and the "impromptu" jam session between the musicians. Gone is Deems Taylor as host/narrator, though he's barely missed: the musical episodes are so overpowering you can't wait for the next one to begin.

Purists may complain that the Disney people should have restored *Night on Bald Mountain, The Rite of Spring,* and other compositions to their original forms — the music was edited and abbreviated to better-complement the animation. Withal, the impact of the graphics, music, and Dolby is awesome.

The digital soundtrack album, a two-record set on Buena Vista Records, is also marvelously impressive, though it would have been more so had the music been restored *here* to the way the composers wrote it.

The old U.N.C.L.E., with the late Leo G. Carroll as Mr. Waverly.

Network Television

Move over, Han — the original Solo is back. Napoleon Solo, that is, the Man from U.N.C.L.E.

Appearing in the wake of super secret agent James Bond — and, in fact, created by Bond's author Ian Fleming — Napoleon Solo and his Russian partner Illya Kuryakin fought for U.N.C.L.E. from 1964 to 1968 before a combination of campiness and national pacifism did them in.

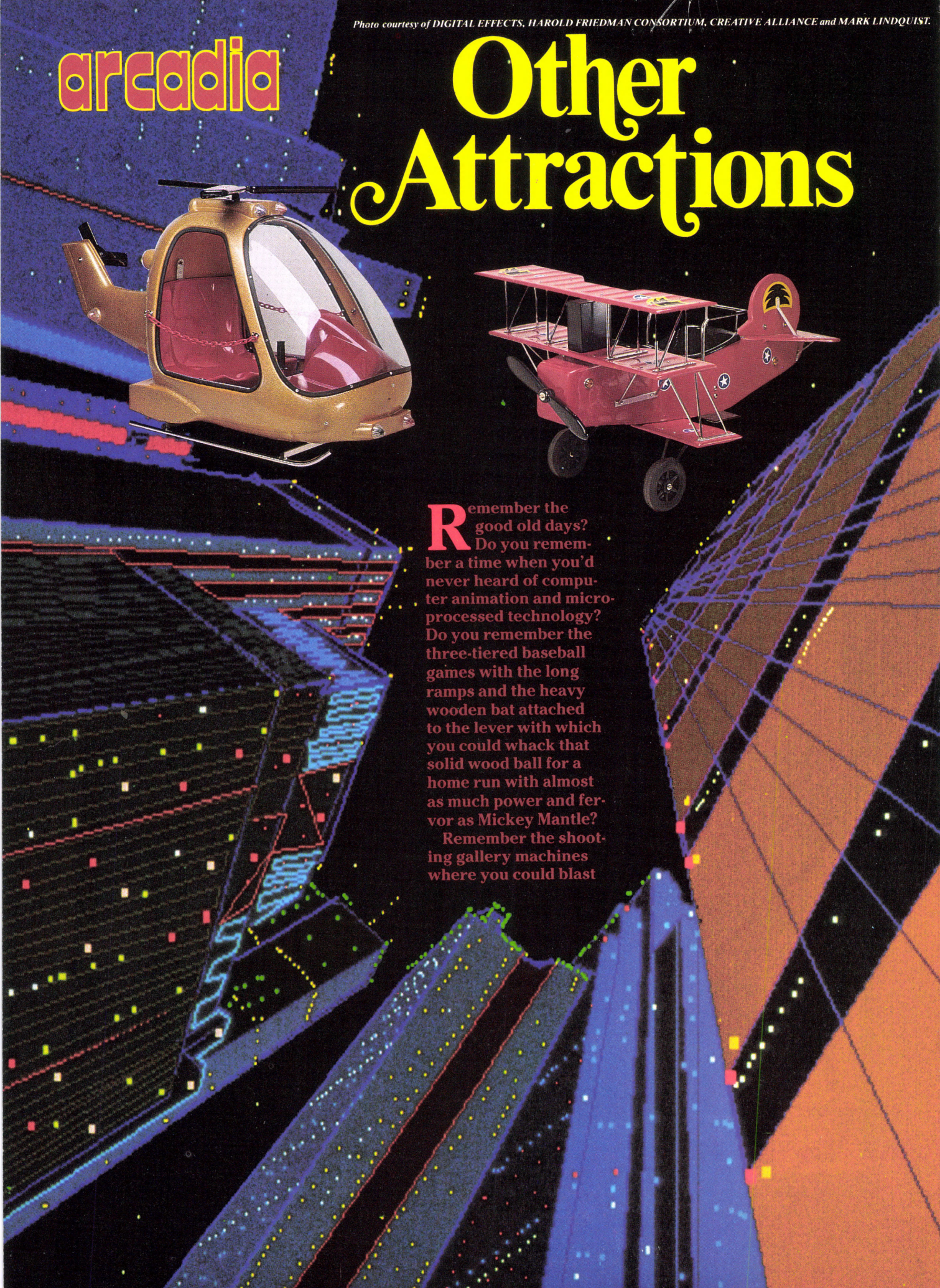
Now, after an arduous year of negotiating with the series' original produc-

Continued on page 69.

Avenger Patrick McNee takes the Waverly role.

Photo courtesy of DIGITAL EFFECTS, HAROLD FRIEDMAN CONSORTIUM, CREATIVE ALLIANCE and MARK LINDQUIST.

Other Attractions



Remember the good old days? Do you remember a time when you'd never heard of computer animation and microprocessed technology? Do you remember the three-tiered baseball games with the long ramps and the heavy wooden bat attached to the lever with which you could whack that solid wood ball for a home run with almost as much power and fervor as Mickey Mantle?

Remember the shooting gallery machines where you could blast

twenty-five shots at mobsters, cowboys, demons, or circus clowns for only a dime? Remember the horse race machines where four friends had to press their buttons at the exact moment the pace horse passed in order to win by a nose?

Well, even if you don't, there are still many in the amusement game industry who remember and cherish those times. They are living reminders that an arcade doesn't have to mean video or even pinball. These are the people who still prosper by manufacturing all those other games: the mechanical and electronic wonders that you hardly think about, even while you're playing them.

OF FUSSBALL, AIR HOCKEY, AND BIORHYTHMS

Even in the most modern of arcades, it is not unusual to see new versions of classic games that have been entertaining generations. First and foremost, there is *Fussball* (pronounced Foos-ball) — also known as *Table Soccer.* This is how it works: two people have four padded, horizontal rods on each side of a deep table. Attached to these rods are anywhere from one to five figures. On the table is a sports court complete with two opposite goals.

The object of the game is to get the little white ball into your opponent's goal by spinning your figure-laden rods so that they kick it. Whoever gets the most goals out of the ten balls supplied is the winner. This game is almost always a guarantee of long-running, physically active fun.

The same is true of the venerable *Air Hockey* machine. While soccer can get a bit bruising at times, everyone knows that the real violence comes on the ice. The air hockey court is a perforated metal surface through which a cushion of air is pumped. On this lies a simple plastic disk. Propelling the disk are two thicker disks complete with a short, shaft-like handle. On either side of the metal table is a thin rectangular slit which serves as a goal.

From this simple design come games of feverish competition, the likes of which haven't been witnessed since the Hatfields met the McCoys. It is not unusual for Air Hockey disks to go flying across the Arcade and into the videogame section, the battle between the two players having become so intense. Here there is only one disk, and whoever scores seven goals first is the winner.

Only recently have Air Hockey table manufacturers included the option of a timer. In that case, whoever has scored the most disks when the air automatically turns off is the winner. Players can rest assured that the action is furious and the energy expended is at least ten times that of your regulation *Burger Time* Game.

Of a slightly more antiquated nature are the *Shuffle Alleys* or *Table Bowling* games. The last major release in this category was Williams' *Omni* machine in the summer of 1980. Up until then, most of these machines were nearly alike. Up to six people could take turns shoving the metal disk down the raised alley to slide across metal clips which would make the plastic ten-pins swing up.

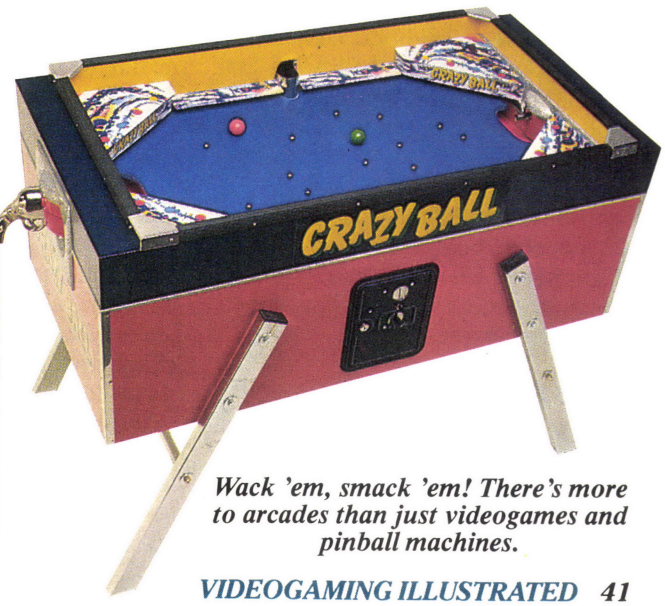
Minor changes came in 1978 with the introduction of solid state components inside and electronic sounds outside. It wasn't until 1982 that Dufferin, Inc. reintroduced the form with *Bowlingo,* a double-alleyed game that was essentially a miniature version of duckpins.

After an exhausting bout with all three of these machines, it was comforting to know that a player could test his metabolic rate and brain wave capacity with a variety of novelty items. There was the *Heart Scan* machine built by MHI Manufacturing: you held two metal rods and the machine charted your heart rate on a small graph. You were then given the small piece of graph paper, suitable for framing.

Still in use are the *Bio Rhythm* machines, developed by the Bio-Card Merchandiser Company. These are the novelty games into which you feed your birthday and a date you wish to know about. The machine delivers a card charting your astrological standings for that day. Scoops on Romance, Health, Travel, and Wealth are all included, as well as lucky numbers and the like.

SKEE-BALL IS KING

But of all the established physical games, the best known — and possibly the best loved — is the *Skee-ball* Machine. Like Jello and Kleenex, the name of the original manufacturer has become synonymous with the product. Since 1914, Skee-Ball Inc. has been producing its mechanical won-



Wack 'em, smack 'em! There's more to arcades than just videogames and pinball machines.

Ride, kiddies, ride, upon your mystery ships. Children have been playing on, and parents paying for these rides and many others like them for years. The new thing in kiddie rides are hydraulics. Now kids can go up and down, too.

der as it always has, except for two minor changes.

The first change was in *Skee-Hop,* the same type of machine except for a shortened runway. Last year the company unleashed its Audio Electronic model, which makes nine different sounds, depending upon whether the player scores high or misses completely.

Otherwise, it's the same challenging game it has been all along. You still get a bunch of balls once you insert your coin and you still roll the balls down an alley, hoping to catapult them into holes scoring anywhere from zero to fifty points. Skee-Ball, Incorporated has stuck with its long-time winner. It is letting its competition make the big changes.

In 1978, Meltec introduced *Boom Ball.* In *Boom Ball,* the balls were shot with little cannons rather than hurled. And in 1982, the ever-inventive Exidy presented *Whirley Bucket,* the pinball-sized *Skee-Ball* variation complete with a moving light that signals a double-point hole and a built-in ticket dispenser which lets the player get coupons for high scores — good for free games or prizes.

HAVE YOUR TICKETS READY

Skee-Ball was the game which made refundable arcade coupons popular, but it is not alone in their use. Bruce Marlow, the Marketing Director of Vending International, sees these tickets as the wave of the future. With the economic times becoming increasingly bleaker, he feels that players will now want more for their money. The only thing limiting ticket use is the lack of arcade owner imagination. Therefore, Vending International intends to do their thinking for them.

"Merchandising programs haven't done well in the past," he maintains, "because no one approached it in the right manner. Who wants the same dumb trinkets over and over for the thousands of accumulated coupons some veteran players can win? There's no variety or imagination in the choice of prizes. There's no educational items. There's no rotation of stock. Nothing like that. Just really goofy, useless stuff."

Marlow's company hopes to change all that with their new fleet of games, many brought over from those video ground-breakers in Japan, each outfitted with automatic coupon dispensers. Not only is there *Frog Hunter,* where one can pelt different plastic frogs with a water machine gun for different points, but now there's *Frog Ball,* where the object is to propel a ball along a looping track into a frog's ever closing mouth. Timing is of the essence here.

Vending International finds gold in the past, distributing machines that are based on solid winners of years gone by. For example, they released the *Mountain Crane* game, which brings back the joy of the old pincer machines that could capture a prize or latch onto empty air at the press of a button.

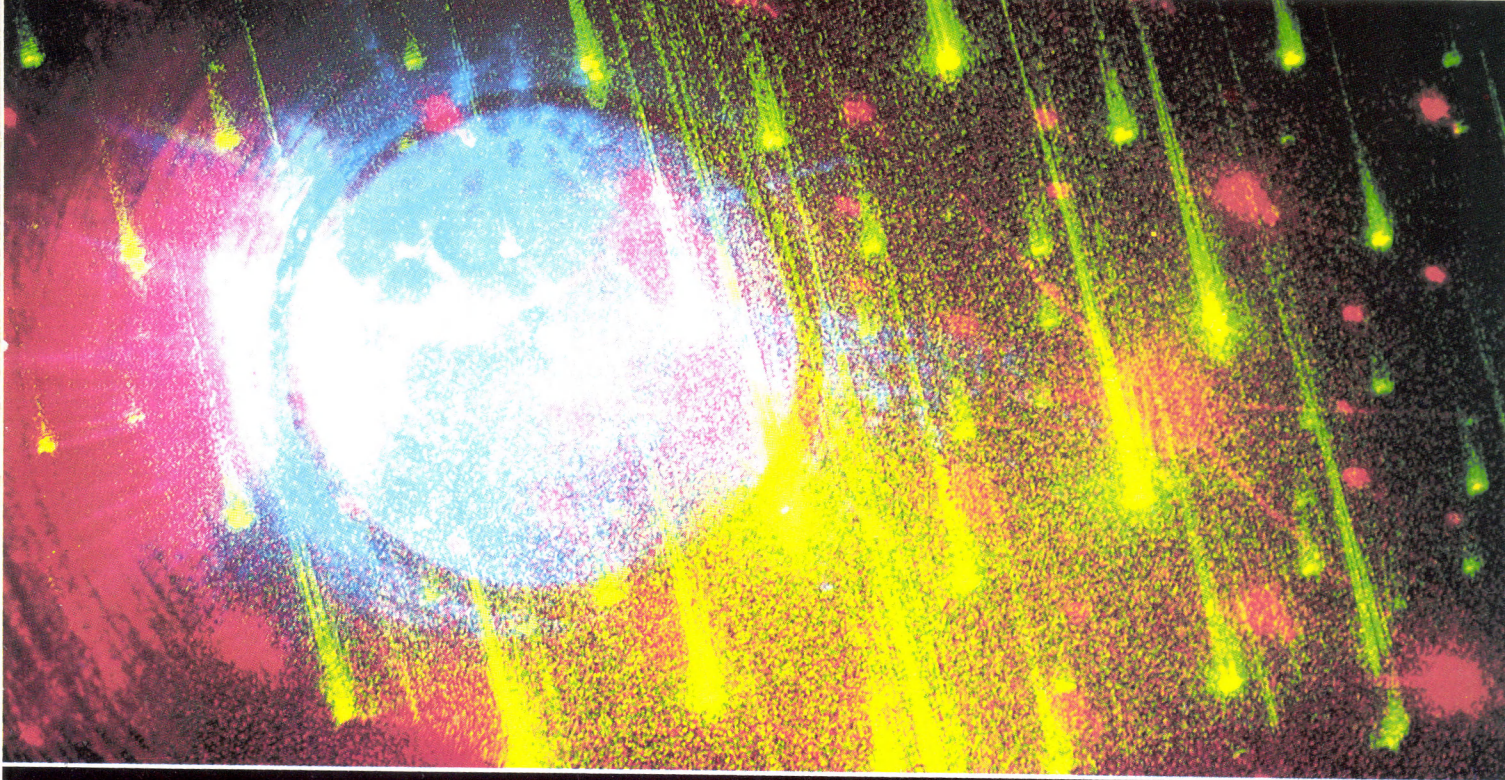
"We're diversifying a bit, it's true," Marlow admits. "We're getting a good response from the arcade people and I think that's because what we have is different from video. Our games have a bit more longevity. It is not something that will be rotated out after ninety days because everybody's burned out on it."

MAY LAFORCE BE WITH YOU

No one knows that better than Mel LaForce, Marketing Director at Kiddie Rides USA. He echoes Marlow's sentiments loud and clear. "The video guys are in the moving business," he states. "In today's market, you buy it, pray it will make money quickly, then sell it and move on to the next, hoping it'll catch. It's a gamble. What's keeping our market alive is that the vid and pin industry has become so saturated. Their popularity is here today and gone tomorrow. Our material is a stable, long term investment. Although an owner's rate of return may not be as quick, there will certainly be as much profit — or more — over the life of the machine."

His material consists of over sixty kiddie rides manufactured by more than a half dozen companies. But these are not the kiddie rides you

Continued on page 68



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conquering:

Q*BERT

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Forget everything you've learned about beating other videogames. Q*Bert is unique.

By Randy Palmer

Before you can begin to conquer *Q*Bert,* there is one thing you must keep in mind: think three-dimensionally.

There are nine levels in *Q*Bert,* each comprised of four screens. All the screens are exactly the same in that, unlike a game such as *Donkey Kong,* you're not going from Ladders to Elevators. This game requires that you jump from cube to cube with occasional forays onto an elevator Disc.

The difficulty level increases with each screen you vanquish, and substantially so. But each screen retains the same basic design.

The stomping ground for Q*Bert is based on the famous hollow cube (whence "cube-ert") which, if you glance away and then look back, seems to turn inside-out. That kind of geometric illusion-making should tip you right off that *Q*Bert* is a game of logic, not reflex.

It's interesting to note, in light of this, that people who are not videogaming fans find themselves enjoying *Q*Bert* while experts at games like *Tempest* and *Defender* tear their hair out trying to reason rather than battle their way through a game.

There is only one control in *Q*Bert,* a rather unusual joystick. It allows you to jump up/left, down/left, up/right, and down/right.

At the arcade operator's discretion, you start with three or five Q*Berts, and a new Q*Bert is earned at scores from six thousand to eleven thousand points.

Speaking of scoring, twenty-five points are earned each time you get Q*Bert to change the color of a square to the Target Color; that is, hop onto a cube and change it to the color depicted in the upper lefthand corner of the screen. The Target Color is different for each screen in every level, though the same from game to game.

(For example, in level one, screen four, all blocks must be changed from blue to yellow.)

The higher levels of play require Q*Bert to hop on each block twice, first to change it to an intermediate color and then to the Target Color.

The Discs

On a given screen, anywhere from two to seven multicolored spinning Discs will be located at either side of the Pyramid, and occasionally at the very top block. They don't move unless Q*Bert is on them, at which point they take a two-to-three second flight to the top of the Pyramid. These flying elevator Discs enable you to lead the serpentine Coily to its death — more on which in a minute.

Do *not* jump onto a Disc too early, otherwise Coily will still be alive when Q*Bert is deposited back at the top of the Pyramid. You've got to get on when the creature is close to the edge.

Coily

Coily the Snake will come out during *every* board. The creature appears first as a rather large, purple ball which will drop to the bottom layer of the Pyramid and, moments later, spring to life.

Coily will snake up the Pyramid, following Q*Bert move-for-move. The monster can't skip a cube to nab you, even if its on an adjoining cube. It gets you when *you* get careless and recross your route, stepping in its path.

Don't squander potential points by *not* using the Discs. Since Coily will come out on every screen, try to use up all the available Discs by leaving at least *one* block unchanged. Once you're switched to the Target Colors, the screen is completed.

Coily enters your life dropping onto the center-bottom of the screen from the top block. Luring Coily to its death is five hundred points.

Red Balls

These small crimson spheres will drop onto the board from either block two or three, just below the tip of the Pyramid from which Q*Bert begins the downward trek.

The Red Balls will drop haphazardly down the Pyramid, then fall off. They are, of course, lethal to our protagonist and should be avoided at all costs — even if it means ruining a perfectly-timed move.

Bugs

Ugg and Wrong-Way are purple "Bugs" that glide across the screen at very inopportune times. They are worth no points, which is no surprise: you can't go near them.

They first appear in screen three, level one. When Ugg and Wrong-Way sneak up on you — and we mean this literally, since they begin at the bottom corners of the Pyramid — any pattern on which you are working will be disrupted. However, these nasties will not follow Q*Bert as Coily does. If they come near you, freeze Q*Bert in place, out of their way, until it's safe.

Slick and Sam

These desperadoes are worth points if you capture them, ie jump onto the block on which they are standing. Don't ignore them unless Coily, Ugg, or Wrong-Way are on your tail.

While Slick and Sam are harmless to one of your Q*Bert lives, they are enemies because they change Target Colors which you have already made a different color.

Therefore, circumstances allowing, grab these two as quickly as possible. They will first appear on screen four of level one.

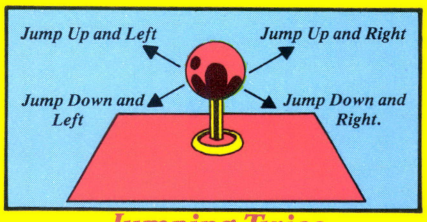
Freeze Ball

This tiny green "gumball" will drop from the sky and, hopefully, right into your lap — assuming your timing is straight-on. Like the lethal Red Balls, the green Freeze Ball plunks from top to bottom, coming out for the first time on screen three of level one.

Go for the Freeze Ball unless you spot something vicious and deadly plummeting your way. Getting this object is not worth sacrificing a life.

What the Freeze Ball will do for you, if captured, is stop all the action on the screen for several exhilarating moments, at the same time allowing Q*Bert to continue jumping the cubes including those on which there are Red Balls, Coily, Ugg, or Wrong-Way!

Use this time wisely, going after unchanged cubes or heading toward a Disc that can be jumped when the action starts — thus decoying Coily to its death.



Jumping Twice

As the screens progress, you'll find that Q*Bert must jump each cube more than once to hit the Target Color. For example, the Target Color may be tan, but when our ambitious hero jumps the cube may go from yellow to blue. You must leave the cube and jump back onto it. The *next* time Q*Bert does so, the blue will go tan.

On screens three and four of each level, Q*Bert will have to make three jumps on each cube to change it to its Target Color.

But beware!

Recall that Slick and Sam (though worth three hundred points if you nab them) will change a cube's color *back* as they jump down the Pyramid. That means you have to go back and patch things up.

Patterns

These are the most successful patterns you can use.

The first, Diagram A, applies to screens one, two, and four. The second, Diagram B, applies to screen three.

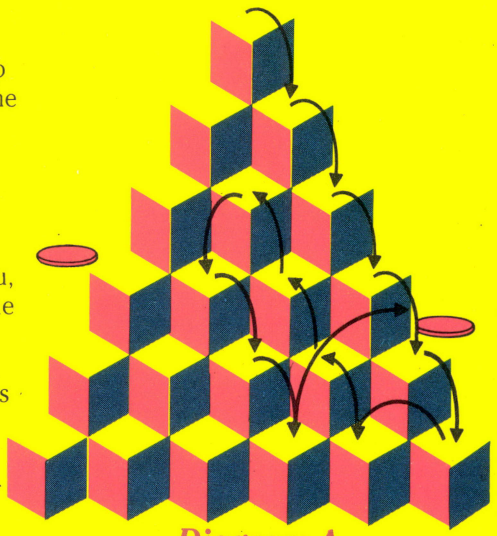


Diagram A

Then . . . reverse the pattern and travel down the other side.

Diagram B

Part One: Come down either side and jump across the bottom. At point C, you will most likely have to move up to board a Disc and lure Coily to certain doom (as shown). At any Point D, wait for Ugg and/or Wrong-Way to bypass you.

Part Two: Return trip, back the way you came, to change to Target Colors. If you want to wait for Coily, change cubes in your area so that you'll be close to a Disc when the serpent arrives.

On the fourth screen of any level, pause toward the top center, toward the right or left — usually right — and you will be able to capture Slick or Sam. On the third screen, pausing at this point will allow you to nab the Freeze Ball.

Additional Strategies

Don't panic when Coily is springing toward Q*Bert. Even if there are no Discs left, a screen can still be completed and the killer defeated in that way. Remember, Coily is just a follower.

Remember, too, that you get no additional points for re-changing cubes tampered-with by Slick and Sam.

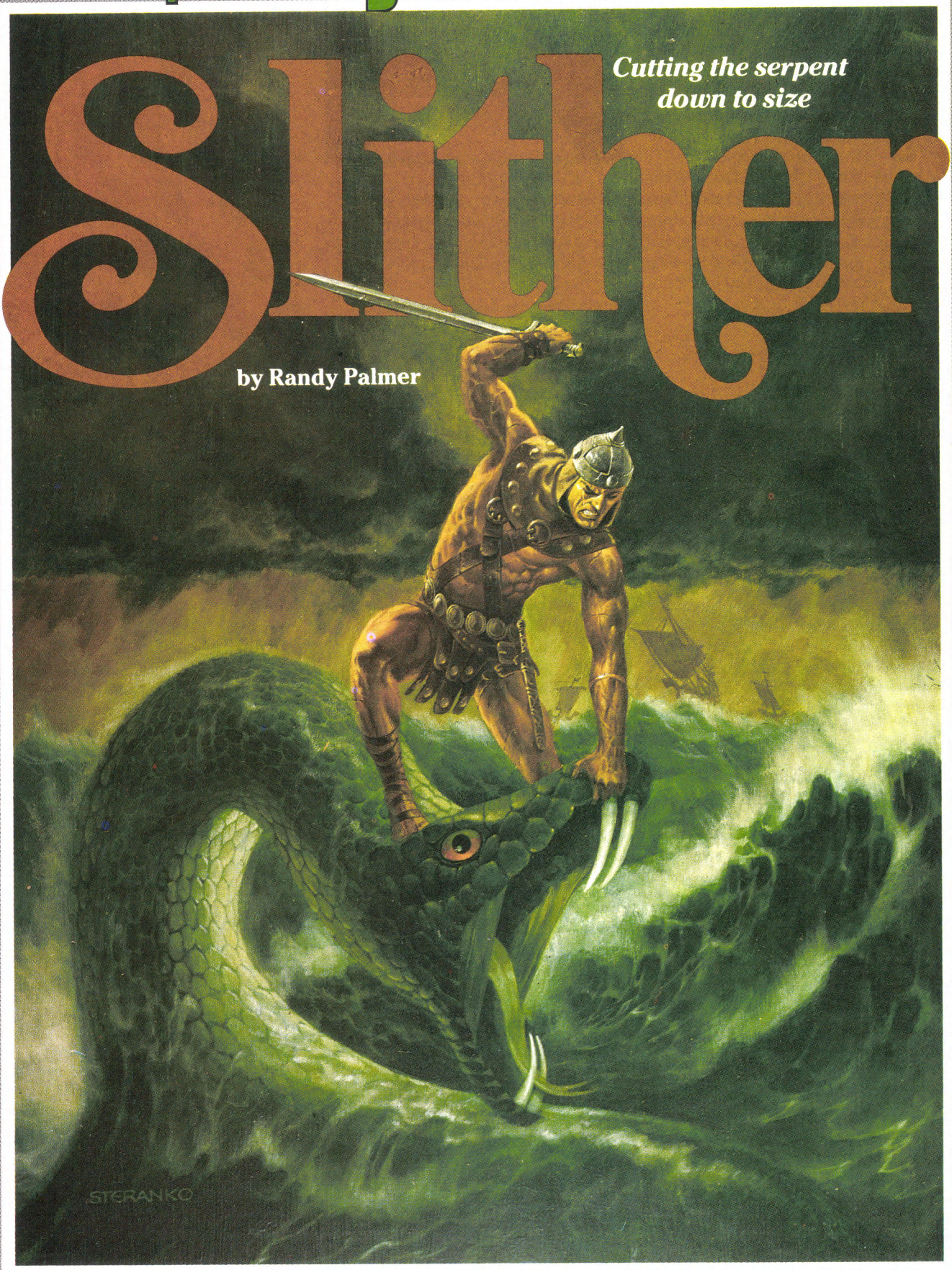
Although there are strategic patterns to follow, you may find yourself abandoning them when Sam and Slick come bouncing down the board. Go after them *only* if you can capture them in one jump. Otherwise, your tendency to follow them for capture will upset the Target Colors you have already attained.

Parker Brothers has acquired the rights to do a* Q*Bert *home videogame. Tentative plans call for a late summer or early fall release. Further details next issue.

conquering: Slither

Cutting the serpent down to size

by Randy Palmer



Slither is something like *Centipede* in high gear.

The battlefield is a pseudo-prehistoric landscape cluttered with two large Boulders and tufts of Trees. (The manufacturer, GDI, refers to the trees as "Grass." If so, they're mighty tall blades.)

Both the Trees and the Boulders hamper the player's maneuverability when he or she attempts to shoot away the Snakes which undulate and slide through the *Slither* screens. Shooting is done with a funnel-like Gun, which players control via Trak-Ball similar to the one used in *Centipede.* There are two Fire buttons: one which allows you to fire toward the top of the screen, the other which discharges toward the bottom. It's impossible to fire in both directions simultaneously; attempting to do so will only result in the Gun arbitrarily blasting away first in one direction, then another. Under those conditions, hitting anything will be a virtue of chance, not skill.

The Snakes enter at once from either side of the screen. Unlike the player, they can climb over the rocks; the Gun must be shifted *around* these impasses.

In addition to Snakes — which, as if they're not bothersome enough, can become invisible; see below — there are also two imposing creatures, a Bird and a Monster which move up and down and diagonally across the screen during gameplay.

The Bird will usually enter in a diagonal trajectory from either the right or left. The Monster (a red biped resembling a Tyrannosaurus Rex) may move slow or fast, diagonally or horizontally, electing at times to deposit extra trees in its wake.

At the beginning of each turn, the *Slither* bonus-point time clock begins to run. It starts at eight thousand points (nine and ten thousand in later rounds) and dwindles rapidly in increments of one hundred points. When a round is successfully completed, the player is awarded whatever point value is lit.

Snakes cannot be killed with one shot. As in *Centipede,* the player must shoot it away one section at a time.

Points are awarded as follows for killing Snakes:

Snake Head: 75 points
Snake Tail: 50 points
Snake Body: 25 points

Killing the "smallest" Snake in any given level awards the player an extra one hundred points.

The Trees are comparable to the mushrooms in *Centipede.* They must be blasted away, and several shots needed to clear each one from the screen. Trees are worth five points when they are merely "mutilated" by gunfire, ten points when completely cleared.

Both the Bird and the Monster are worth from 250 to one thousand points, depending upon a variety of factors: the difficulty level, how fast they are moving, and their proximity to the player.

Early Stages

In the early levels of *Slither,* players can rack up points fairly easily by clearing the screen of Snakes and grabbing the *Slither* bonus while it is still relatively high. This will enable the player to reach the fifteen thousand point mark quickly — the target score at which an extra Gun is awarded.

When the action commences, the Gun will be approximately two-thirds of the way up the screen, located in the middle. Immediately move it to either side and begin knocking off Snakes. Each section of a Snake's body will vanish when struck, thus allowing the next bullet to penetrate the succeeding body section.

The Fire control allows for "rapid-action," but is restricted in that the first bullet fired must hit a target (Snake, Tree, Boulder, Bird, or Monster) before the next projectile can be launched.

Snakes can be dispatched rather easily when they are travelling in a straight line. Simply move the Gun under or over them, press the appropriate Fire button, holding it down, and the Snake will be killed rapidly, piece by piece.

Hitting a Snake in the middle will split it. When two short Snakes are moving parallel to one another, place the Gun two inches or so from them and fire while jiggling the Trak-Ball. If the maneuver is done properly your execution will signal the Snakes' execution. The Gun will fire one shot at the first Snake, the next shot at the second Snake, and so forth.

Keep away from the sides of the screen. Both the Bird and Monster enter from the sides and might strike and dissolve an unsuspecting Gun. Either stay toward the middle of the screen, or near the top or bottom.

The sole exception is when either creature is some distance from you *or* if it has just been killed. (Destroyed creatures require a few seconds to regenerate and rejoin the game.)

The most important fact to keep in mind is that the Gun can get caught in the branches of the Trees. If this happens, you will be able to fire only in one direction. If your shooting is limited to *down,* and the Snake comes at you from the left or right, you're a goner.

Boulders are equally troublesome: a Snake can cross a boulder, but your bullets cannot penetrate one.

Avoid these traps by staying in clear areas. Meanwhile, when time allows, shoot away as many Trees as possible.

In the early stages of the game — rounds one through three — the player may allow extra time to blast away Trees before shooting at Snakes. However, in rounds four and up, as the Snakes become more plentiful and more difficult to track, concentration must be directed to killing nearby enemies. Common sense should tell you to turn on the Trees *only* when there is no immediate danger.

When you *do* fire at the trees, don't do so in random fashion. Try to blast yourself some escape routes so that, when confronted by a tangle of Snakes, the Gun can be moved to a spot where it won't be trapped *and* has an unobstructed firing line at the Snakes.

Later Stages

As the difficulty level increases, more and more Snakes will appear on the screen. They will not be idle, moving faster as the game progresses. Nor will they be your only headache. The Bird and Monster will appear more frequently, and more Trees will sprout to block your Gun.

Try to kill the Bird as soon as it appears. It is dangerously unpredictable. It might go right for your Gun, or it may ignore you for a while, give you the cold shoulder and then unexpectedly drop down and crush your weapon. Better to be rid of the menace than gamble on its whims.

The Monster is even more annoying. On occasion it will stomp across the screen slow enough to be a very easy target; most of the time, however, it'll move rapidly, in a diagonal course, making it much more difficult to site

Continued on page 69

meet the original JOUST™

by Steven Bent

A classic illustration by H.J. Ford showing Sinbad bound to the Roc.

When people think of birds, it isn't in terms of combat, but rather with visions of nests and eggs and brightly colored plumage. Yet history has shown us that birds *can* be deadly.

"I see all the birds are flown," King Charles I once uttered metaphorically while gazing around the House of Commons for some well-known dissidents he wished to execute.

His advisor, the Duke of Buckingham, leaned close and suggested helpfully that if it were *birds* he wanted to see, his majesty might ask for a chicken dinner. The incompetent Duke was murdered for his efforts.

Birds, you see, *can* be dangerous.

Most of us don't give birds a second thought. No wonder. They're not very imposing creatures, beautiful if you've the time and patience to stalk, stare and study them. However, apart from snacking on insects they do little to influence our lives.

Scientists find them somewhat more interesting, studying such diverse phenomena as how they fly and whence they evolved. (One intriguing theory is that the dinosaurs didn't die out: over the five million years of their gradual extinction they simply got smaller and sprouted feathers. You'll be reading more about the evidence pro and con in the upcoming Ion magazine *Beyond*.)

Apart from bird-watchers and researchers, those who have paid our plumed friends the most attention are the fantasists. From the earliest days of fiction, birds have been used as *Joust*-like modes of transport.

The most famous "carrier pigeon" of all time was the monstrous Roc of the Sinbad legends. Having dozed off on a remote island and missed his ship, Sinbad stumbled across an egg measuring fifty paces around. Moments later, the sky went completely black as the parent arrived. Lashing himself to the creature's leg, Sinbad hitched a ride from the island.

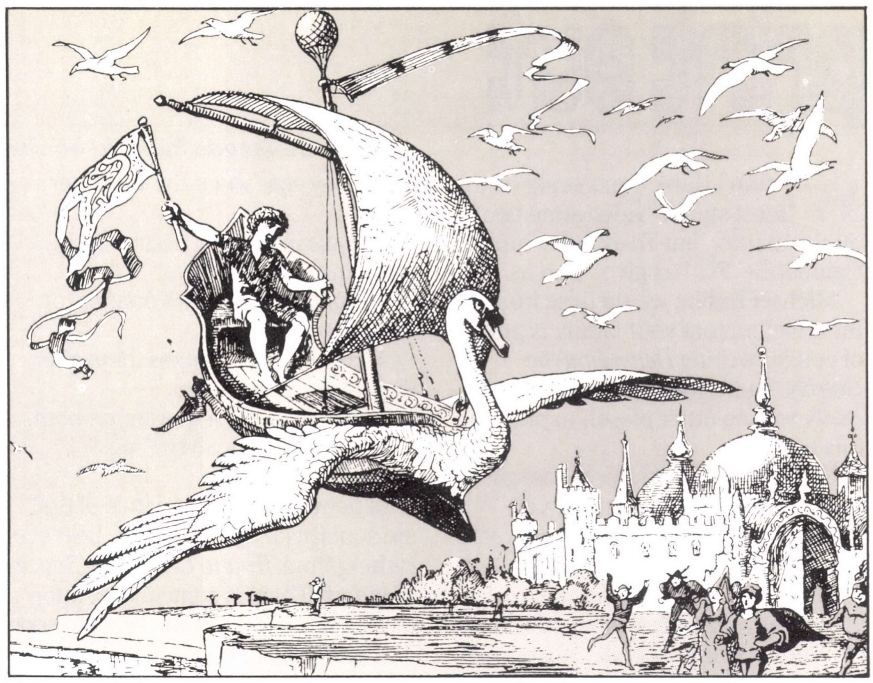
Though no one ever rode a Roc, there is evidence which suggests that the bird actually existed. The largest birds on earth, achieving heights of seven or eight feet, dwelt in remote places like Australia and New Zealand, where there was a dearth of lethal carnivores. It is thought that, landing here, ancient Arabic seamen spotted now-extinct giants like the phororhacos and were inspired to spin the Roc yarn.

Like the Roc, the Simurgh was an enormous bird of Middle Eastern lore, one who was all-knowing, could heal any wounds, and chauffeured people to and fro in various folktales.

Birds like the Phoenix, ravens, and crows played important parts in fantasy throughout the years, though only a few of them doubled as aircraft. In 1785, author Rudolph Raspe began publishing the saga of adventurer Baron Munchausen, who more than once mounted a bird and soared into the heavens. In the 1961 film based upon these tales, Munchausen even met Sinbad's Roc.

Hans Christian Andersen sent Inchelina (aka Thumbelina) journeying on the back of a swallow while, later in the nineteenth century, artist Isidore Grandville gave us cargo-carrying birds in works of whimsy. However, it wasn't until the twentieth century that bird-human flight really — well, took off! It's perhaps no coincidence that as soon as we won our mechanical wings we hopped on birds to get about, seeking to recapture pre-industrial age innocence.

The most striking parallel between *Joust* and the body of such literature occurs in Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon* comic strip, where denizens of the planet Mongo often galloped about on bird-back. Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan only managed to go aloft once in his twenty-six novels, but it was a dandy flight: snatched into the clouds by a nameless "great bird" in *Jungle Tales of Tarzan,* Tarzan stuck around until he decided that there was no reason "to submit thus passively to a feathered creature however enormous." Grasping his hunting knife, he gut the bird and fell to the treetops.



***Ford's rendering of a "swan-boat" from the fairytale* Minnikin.**

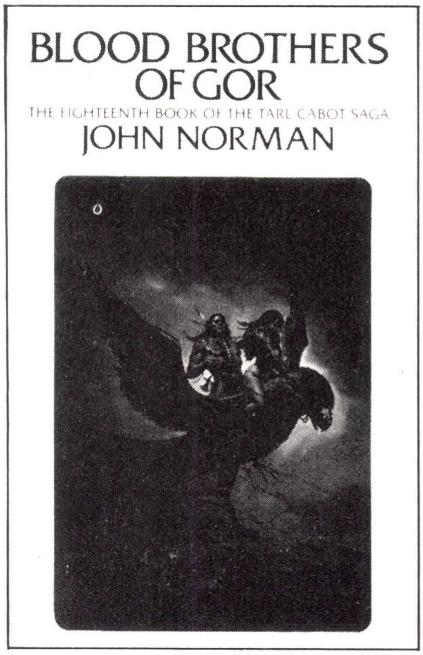
Antoine De Saint Exupery brought the hero of his 1943 novel *The Little Prince* from asteroid B-612 to earth via a flock of birds, while the anthropomorphised mice Bernard and Bianca flit about on a seagull in Walt Disney's 1977 cartoon *The Rescuers.*

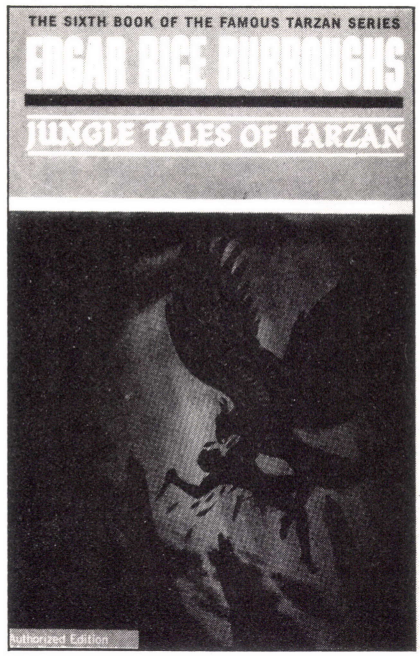
However, since the middle 1960's, bird-back riding has largely been the domain of John Norman, author of the Gor novels. There are presently eighteen volumes recounting the adventures of earthmen Tarl Cabot on the barbaric world of Gor. The principal mode of transport on that distant planet is tarns, great eagle-like birds used for basic travel and combat alike.

As the price of fuel rises, and the cost of gene-splicing plummets, we may find that breeding giant birds is the most economical way to travel. Until then, Williams Electronics has done a splendid job of giving us as many birds as you could ever want.

King Charles would approve.

Literature and folklore have given us the cultural roots of many of our most popular videogames, including* Joust. *Recently, giant birds have been carrying heroes and warriors aloft in some of our most popular fiction.





print out

By E.C. Meade

EC Meade looks at books about videogames and related fields

We didn't think there could be a "most stupid" videogame book on the market, but Triad Publishing of Gainesville, FL, has given it to us.

Michael Rubin: we surmise from the introduction that your family is proud of you for writing *Defending the Galaxy.* That's good — because there really was no other reason to publish this book.

For the benefit of future videogame book authors, of which there will doubtless be more than the bookracks require, here's a brief tutorial.

There's an art to writing an overview of any subject, a talent our friend Mr. Rubin clearly lacks. It's not enough to get a kick out of the subject. One needs a theme, something which eluded this book's assembler. (It hurts to call him an author, a credential which would put him in the company of Hemingway and Michener.)

This work isn't cohesive: it's a hodgepodge of insignificance.

What is the purpose of Rubin providing a tour of modernday constellations such as *Paku* the Pac-Man and *Mario* the hero-lover? The star-fields are drawings, not photographs, thus lacking the verisimilitude which would have made this section work. Equally pointless are the blueprints for building a "coin recovery device," ostensibly to get quarters from under machines. It's neither practical nor funny, causing such words as "useless" and "moronic" to leap to mind.

However, Rubin's piece de resistance is "Five Similarities Between Oatmeal and Videogames." You'll learn:

1. They cost about the same per serving
2. You can get into trouble for throwing either of them
3. Not everyone likes oatmeal or videogames
4. Hardly anyone likes them after they're six months old
5. You can stick a quarter on both.

See what we mean by "most stupid"?

In between the abundance of fluff are superficial tips on how to beat everything from *Tron* to oldies like *Space Invaders.* There is some useful information here, but it's like trying to spot a single frame of film in a two hour movie.

The $4.95 is better spent playing.

A REAL GEM

Actually, that last statement is not entirely true. Better to spend $2.95 of that picking up a copy of Jon Freeman's splendid book *The Playboy Winner's Guide to Board Games.*

Published by Playboy books, this thick paperback is a volume which tells you how to beat your opponents in such games as *Clue, Easy Money, Careers, Othello, 4000 A.D., Scrabble,* and dozens of others.

The wonder of Freeman's book is not that he knows so much about these games or that he writes with both wit and style, but that the book can be read for entertainment. You'll marvel, for example, at the tactics you never knew existed for Monopoly.

You'll be looking at old friends with a fresh sense of discovery; that takes talent, and Freeman has it.

AN UNREAL GEM

Fantasy and science fiction role-playing games are an industry which is right behind videogaming in its staggering growth.

The two fields have much in common. Players are using them to live other lives vicariously, although by virtue of their nature role-playing games can flesh out these adventures to a greater degree.

The incredible detail of many of these games has drawn fire from educators and psychologists both, who maintain that role-players tend to shun reality by crawling into the snug excitement of these games.

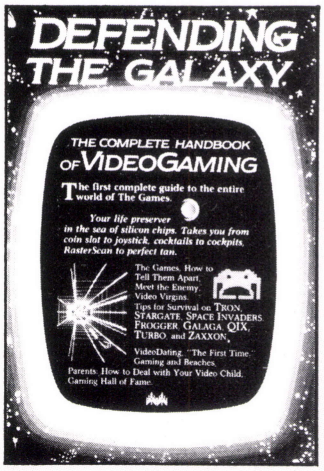
Maybe.

But they *are* fun withal, and two books published in oversized paperback by Bantam will give you a splendid introduction to the role-playing media.

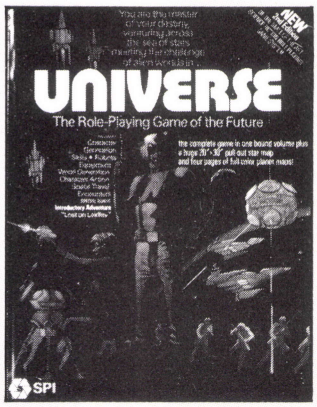
The works are *Universe* and *DragonQuest,* and both provide not only the complete rules for playing these and other games, but include the boards and other material as well.

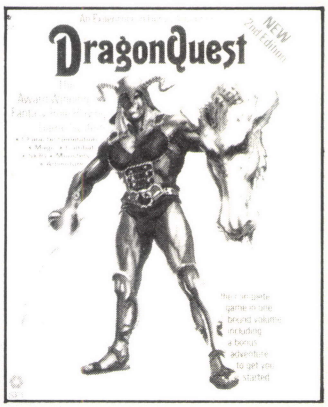
It's difficult to communicate the complexity of these games in a few lines; suffice to say that details such as the kind of footwear your character owns — walking shoes, low boots, sandals — or whether you travel the seas by large masted galley, a barge, or some other vessel all impact dramatically upon the outcome of the adventure.

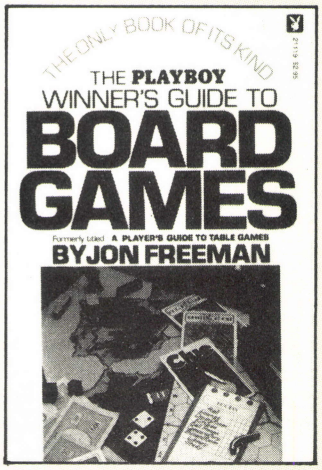
The Bantam books are $11.95 each, a steep price for a book but a bargain for travel through worlds of fantasy.



This month's selection of books range from volumes which are sublime and literate to one which is witless.







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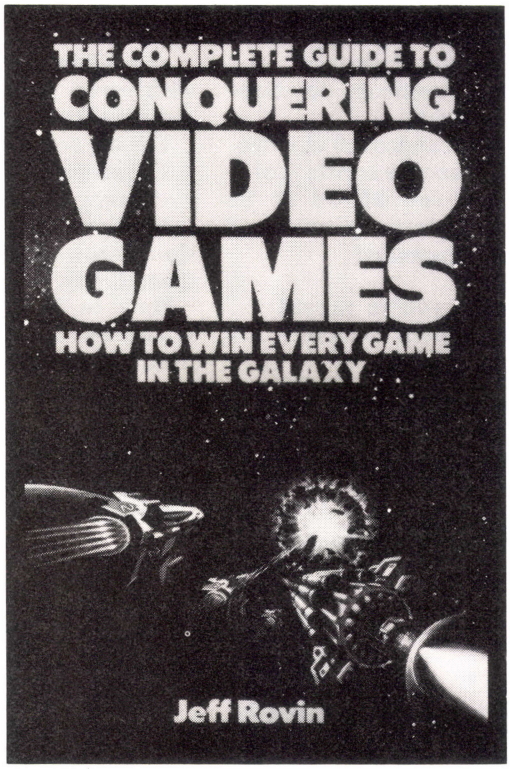

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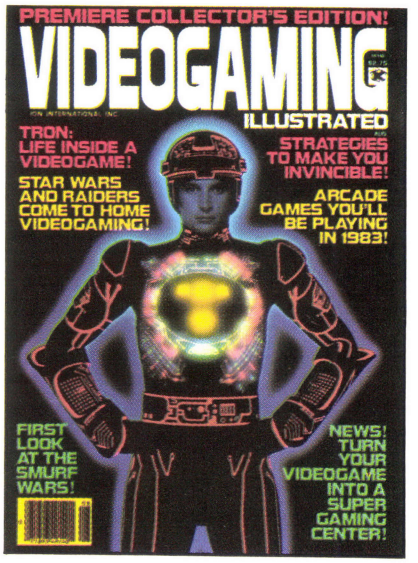
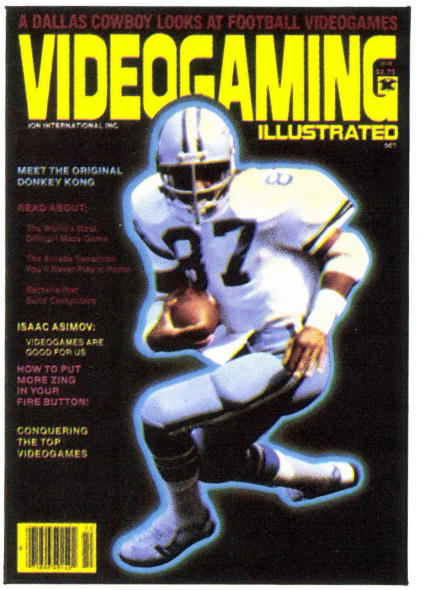


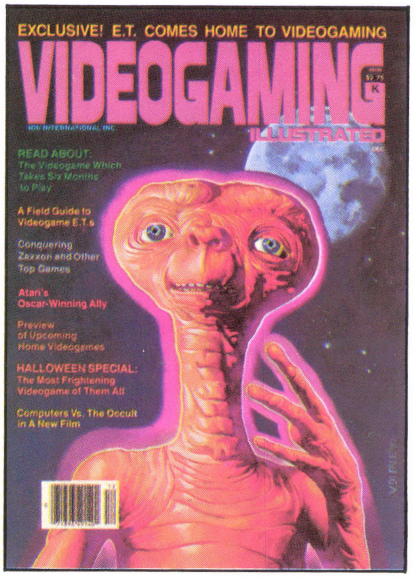
ISSUE #1

- *Tron:* how the movie was made, with seven pages of breathtaking color photos.
- The big arcade flops of 1982.
- The origin of ColecoVision, and a revealing chat with its president.
- Jim Levy, the president of Activision, throws hearts and daggers at the industry.
- How to hook your videogame system to your stereo amplifier for window-rattling sound effects.



ISSUE #2

- A gridiron superstar looks at football videogames, and tells why he opened an arcade.
- Science and science fiction author Isaac Asimov talks about why videogames are good for us.
- The cultural forebears — make that foreapes — of Donkey Kong.
- Conquering *Space Cavern, Pick Axe Pete, Space Battle, Donkey Kong,* and *Turbo.*
- How computers work.



ISSUE #3

- A look at all the home videogames featuring extraterrestrials.
- What happens when computers are used to serve the occult?
- An interview with an Oscar winning actor who has an unusual relationship with Atari.
- How videogames are developed and manufactured, from concept to program.

ISSUE #4

- The story of the *Star Wars* saga, on film and in videogames, including a penetrating interview with the man who plays Darth Vader.
- An interview with radio's Don Imus, the most irreverent figure in the history of the medium — and avowed hater of videogaming.
- Conquering *Cosmic Creeps, Atlantis, Kangaroo,* and *Dig-Dug.*

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Our readers write.

To the Editor:

In the December, 1982 issue, in your feature "Focus On," you provided a guide to videogame extraterrestrials. But there was one with which I wasn't familiar. Could you please tell me who made the game *Alien Invasion,* and whether or not it's compatible with the Atari 2600?

Richard Eng
New York, NY

We've had a number of requests to identify this particular cartridge. It's part of the old Fairchild Channel F videogame system, which has recently been repackaged and rereleased, on an extremely limited scale, by Zircon International of Campbell, CA.

To the Editor:

This doesn't address any aspect of your magazine, though I hope that Input is the appropriate forum for my complaint.

My favorite game is *Battlezone.* Having broken the three million mark, I consider myself pretty good. Recently, our local arcade changed the game. They got rid of the gunsites on the front of the unit and left the viewing screen wide open.

This is advantageous for people watching, but not for the player. It's more difficult to feel as though you're "in" the tank; it's also a trial to *hear* the machine with all the other noises around. (Going into the millions takes *concentration.)*

This gave me an idea which I think would benefit all videogame players. I think there should be a headphone jack on all machines so that players could plug in walkman-type headphones. Not only would that block out extraneous sounds, it would give a "stereo" feel to the game as well.

Cory Tomczyk
Watertown, WI

We suspect that most local fire departments would outlaw any development which left players tucked in a corner, unseen and oblivious to all around them.

To the Editor:

I noted with chagrin your editorial critical (February 1983) of another videogame magazine regarding their misspelling of a word.

How petty! It was an easy mistake for any writer to make. I can readily live with a magazine that on occassion — or is that ocassion, or maybe ocasion — misspells a word. I find it more difficult to live with a magazine which reports that a product is durable when it is not, specifically the Starfighter joystick ("Supergaming"). I bought a pair and within a week both units had failed.

L.E. Miles
Independence, MO

Not long ago, this country watched a pair of shuttle astronauts unable to take a space walk because of details which had been overlooked in their EVA-ware. Any lack of time and care, whether in manufacturing a spacesuit or spelling a word, should not be tolerated. Accidents happen, of course; we make them here. But sloppiness is another matter.

As for the joystick in question, we tested three of that unit and all worked just fine. Any new line of mechanical products is bound to have some bugs in it; we're convinced that this is the case with Starfighter.

By the way, you went 0-for-three; the correct spelling is occasion.

To the Editor:

In your last issue, you intimated that the second trilogy of the *Star Wars* saga — movies four, five, and six — will move chronologically forward.

Not so. Lucas himself has said that film four takes place after five, and five after six. In other words, he's working backwards.

However, you are correct in stating that films seven, eight, and nine will be in chronological order.

Seth Rose
West Hartford, CT

Thanks. Now then, anyone care to speculate on the correct order in which to play the videogames?

To the Editors:

I've noticed that back issue number two of *Videogaming Illustrated* is much more expensive than the others.

What gives? Are you trying to rip readers off?

Bernie Michaelson
New York, NY

Nothing of the kind, Bernie. That issue, like our fourth edition happens to be extremely scarce. We think you'll find, however, that all Ion Publications will increase in value on the collector's market as the years go on.

Editor's Note:

This is as good a place as any to tidy up some business regarding letters and other matters.

First, we've been receiving many letters from readers asking for strategies to help them solve certain problems in specific games. To wit: Alfred Nota of New York City wanted to know, "When falling into the part of the Raiders of the Lost Ark *game that has the branch and the hole in the rock, you come into a place where objects run into you and, if they hit you, some of your possessions are lost. Is there something needed when in this room?" To Alfred and the rest of you: we just don't have the person-power to address each of these points personally.*

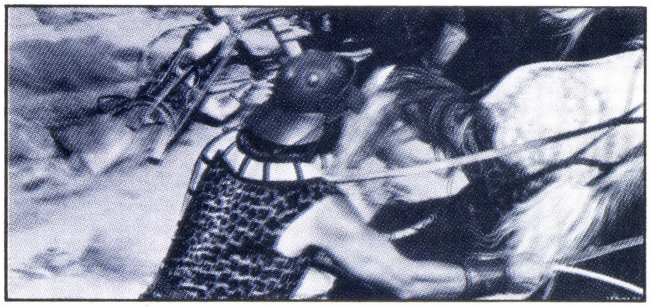
However, in addition to our detailed articles on individual games, we'll be covering a lot of ground in our newly expanded "Championship Videogaming" section. In the meantime, does anyone out there care to help our friend Alfred?

Speaking of our expanded editorial matter, we also wanted to let you know that next issue is our last bimonthly issue. Starting with that April magazine, we'll be coming your way once each month.

Incidentally, issue number six contains one of cover artist Vincent DiFate's most striking paintings; it features one of the most popular characters in the history of any *medium, one whose milieu is finally coming to the home videogame screen.*

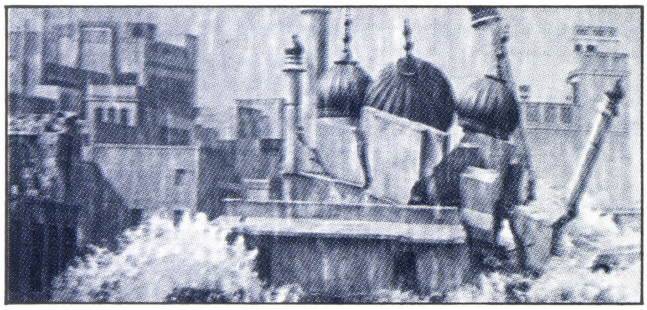
See you then.

Send your letters and comments to:
Input, Videogaming Illustrated, 32 Oak Ridge Road, Bethel, CT. 06801.



Has life become a real drag?

Is your world coming apart?



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- **Inside Pinball: squeezed from this issue, what makes those flippers flip.**
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Preview

Continued from page 38

Sid the Spellbinder

Object

This is a game for young people.

Sid is a worm-like creature who snakes across the screen from left to right and back several times. Using a land-based gun, the player tries to shoot away each segment of Sid's body. After Sid has been obliterated, the Odyssey Voice asks the player to use the keyboard to spell words like "pretty" and "should." Extra ammunition is awarded for each correctly spelled word.

After each group of three words Sid returns, slithering faster than before. The game ends when the player runs out of ammunition or Sid reaches the bottom of the screen and eats it all.

JC: Odyssey has taken a quantum leap forward in the use of videogames as educational tools. I do not hesitate to call this one of the most important videogames ever created.

Diehard videogamers are likely to be critical of the simplicity of the game: even at his highest velocity, Sid is an easy target for seasoned players. But the game wasn't created for them. It encourages youngsters to spell, and to spell correctly if they want to continue playing. Accordingly, gameplay has been designed with seven to ten year olds in mind.

The Voice is better-used here than in any of Odyssey's other videogames. A gentle voice tells the child, "Okay — now spell such-and-such," while a raucus, metallic voice announces Sid's coming or the incorrect spelling of a word.

A word book accompanies the cartridge, a slim but surprisingly handsome volume which uses and defines all of the words in the videogame's thirty-seven word vocabulary.

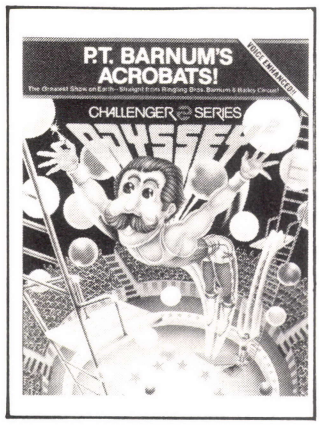
Sid the Spellbinder is a brilliant melding of keyboard, Voice, videogame action, and the print medium. It should be required software in all elementary schools.

ECM: Just one small disagreement. Given the low level of literacy across *every* age group, I'd make *Sid the Spellbinder* compulsory in high schools as well.

I hope Odyssey gives this game the advertising support it deserves.

I can't say enough about this game. It's dull as videogames go from an adult perspective, but it's one of those beacons which lights the way for everybody else.

I watched some kids playing this game, and they were a little impatient with the spelling aspect. Good: It means they're learning.



Acrobats

Object

This Odyssey cartridge allows one or two players to fling an acrobat from a platform to a teeter-totter, which must be slid back and forth to catch and hurl the daredevil skyward, toward racks of balloons. Points are scored for bursting balloons. Their "explosion" sends the figure arcing away, often into another balloon. New rows of balloons replace popped-out columns.

If the see-saw is not precisely positioned, the falling acrobat splats on the ground. The player(s) get ten acrobats in all.

ECM: When I first saw this game, I thought it was going to be just like *Circus Atari* — and parts of it *are:* the whole theme of popping balloons, for one. However, the two games *feel* different. The Odyssey see-saw has less bounce, the figures are more realistic, and the balloons move differently, just to cite the obvious.

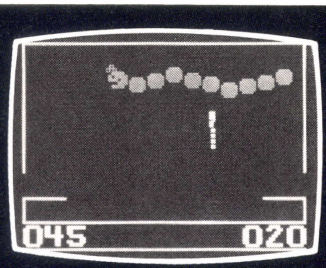
I'm not going to say this is a great game; it has some serious flaws. More than once I watched my acrobat bounce from one to another of the balloons, often for more than thirty seconds at a stretch, while I twiddled my thumbs.

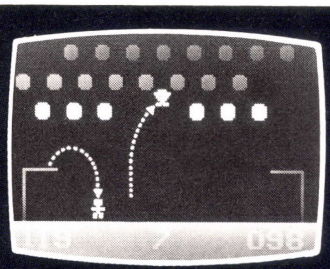
But that doesn't happen in all variations, particularly in the stationary balloon version. Because the area around a given balloon isn't always filling with new targets, your placement has to be more precise. I also had fun with the shield options: stationary (permanently located in the center) and random (the shield pops up here and there, now and then). If you hit the "wall," your acrobat comes down fast. Working around it is a challenge.

Great entertainment for kids; diverting amusement for adults.

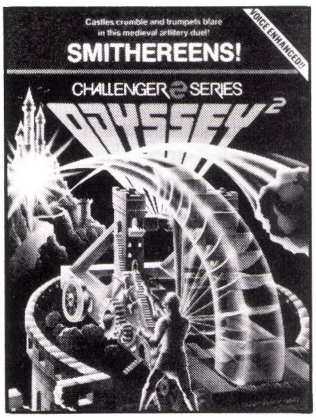
JC: For the record, I found this cartridge much less lively than *Circus Atari.* Or, comparing Odyssey to Odyssey, *P.T. Barnum's Acrobats* hasn't the speed and fascination of Odyssey's *Breakdown/Blockout,* which are the best of the batter-the-wall games on the market — *Super-Breakout* notwithstanding. But on its own terms, this cartridge offers enough one- and two-player variations to give you plenty of enjoyment. I found the stationary balloon and shield games to be *very* good, the moving balloon games *very* boring. I would add only that the Voice capacity is better used in this game than in most others: it's quite natural for the acrobat to say things like "You blew it!" upon hitting the floor hard. (Actually, that's not *exactly* the phrase he or she would use ... but why quibble?)

***Sid the Spellbinder** not only offers most of the entertainment of a shooting gallery, if also makes one use their brain. The more correctly spelled words, the more ammunition one is awarded to take pot shots at Sid.*





Atari and Odyssey went to battle in court over similarities between other videogames. Will history repeat itself in the case of* Circus Atari *and* P.T. Barnum's Acrobats? *Are the two cartridges similar enough to be litigious?



Smithereens.

Object

According to Odyssey, the setting for *Smithereens* is the days of old when knights were bold. "Football has yet to be invented — and castle crumbling is one of the most popular national sports."

Two adversaries load and fire catapults from opposite sides of the screen. They are each trying to destroy the other's castle — though hasty shots can raze one's own edifice as well. Nine hits reduces each structure to rubble. The length of time the player pushes the joystick to any side determines how taut the catapult becomes, and how long or short the stone missile flies.

There are three settings which dictate how long a player must hold the joystick to achieve the desired tension; this makes for a slow, medium, or fast game. The setting cannot be switched during the game.

Smithereens can only be played by two videogamers.

JC: I had fun with *Smithereens*, though I wouldn't call it a heavyweight game. The technical challenge of hitting the castle, catapult, or enemy knight — all of which earn you points — is quickly mastered on all three levels. However, the fact that only the winner gets to keep his or her points is a nice touch, and the sound effects with the Voice module are striking. The concussive sounds of walls being struck, and the squish of the lake-cum-marsh between the opponents are particularly well-done. The sound effects, without the Voice, are flat.

This is a great game for five-to-eight year olds, and adults will have a lot of laughs playing with young kids — but there isn't much here for the serious videogamer. Odyssey would have been wise to throw in a few curves like flaming projectiles or clusters of stones.

ECM: Maybe I've been spoiled by Atari's lightning-fast *Warlords*, but *Smithereens* is one of the slowest "action" games I've ever played. You don't even have to watch the screen: just count off the seconds, release the joystick, and wait to hear the crash.

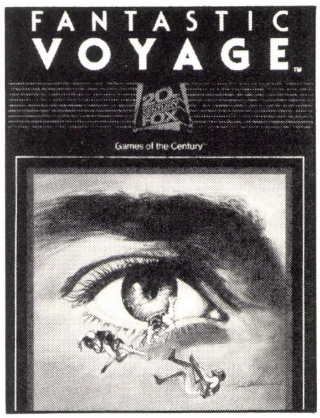
I agree that the sound effects are great, almost worth the price of admission — yet I found the Voice "narrator" *very* annoying. I don't like being called "a turkey" and other names in the midst of even a plodding game; whoever at Odyssey thought this was "cute" should be paid in Bobby Sherman records.

Of all the things the Voice *could* have done — speaking a Lady's good wishes, the king's asides, a squire's concerns — anachronistically emulating some smart-mouthed arcade game was the worst possible choice.

In short, except for the resounding audio, I found this a bore. I ended up flipping boulders at my own castle just to get the bloody thing overwith.

The graphics are equally pallid, the knights and castles more suggestive of Mr. Bill at the beach.

If you only own an Odyssey unit, you'd be wiser to spend your money on *Pick Axe Pete*, *K.C.'s Krazy Chase*, or *U.F.O.* *Smithereens* just doesn't do the trick.



Fantastic Voyage

Object

Similar to the motion picture of the same name, your miniaturized ship must be negotiated through a blood vessel, reaching and disintegrating the life-threatening Blood Clot before the patient dies.

Along the way, you must obliterate Antibodies (released when your craft touches the artery wall), Defense Cells, Bacteria, and other objects.

This is the eighth 2600 compatible game from Games of the Century, the 20th Century-Fox subsidiary. It's their third movie/TV tie-in to date (*Megaforce* and *Alien* came before) though far from their last, with *M*A*S*H*, *Porky's*, *Nine-To-Five*, *The Fall Guy*, and *The Entity* upcoming.

ECM: This videogame has less in common with *Microsurgeon* than it does with *River Raid*, as the ship follows the course of the blood "river" while blasting deadly objects that move to-and-fro. The difference is that *River Raid* has excellent graphics and gameplay. *Fantastic Voyage* has so-so graphics and average gameplay.

I guess what bothers me about this game is that there's so little to it: you speed up or slow down to evade or blast what's bobbing in your way, a decision dictated by how much time the little clock on the screen tells you your patient has left to live. Granted, *River Raid* hasn't very much more to it on the surface — but there the game creates a sense of flight and the ambiance of battle.

Fantastic Voyage is all stick-figures: the thin walls of the artery, the key-shaped Enzymes, the bubble-like Clotlets, the flat, uninspired ship, etc.

Games of the Century has some interesting licenses and some good concepts (though we noticed that one of the parent company's richest properties, *Planet of the Apes*, isn't among them). However, without Activision-caliber programmers and designers to pull them off this company's going to end up the Lost Opportunity of the Century.

JC: I think E.C. is way off base about this game. The graphics are admittedly sparse, but there are all kinds of flavorful touches, such as the oscilloscopic Heart Monitor at the bottom of the screen (and the audio beeping which lets you know how strong or weak the patient is), the functional as well as decorative Time Clock, the wonderful graphics when you get closer to your goal and the blood vessel constricts, and great sound effects which include some of the best shooting simulations of any videogame on the market.

The blood vessel is extremely tortuous, and I enjoy the fact that you can only travel within it. There are enemies hiding in its many jagged niches, and I *like* the option of being able to shoot or elude these bodily defenses/invaders. You accumulate points for blasting them — at the same time potentially risking the patient's life because you're wasting valuable time.

This is a very worthwhile variation on the faster, mindless shoot-'em-ups which E.C. seems to enjoy.

Journey/Escape

Object

The rock group Journey is on the road. In this 2600-compatible, rather abstract saga of the band's trials and triumphs, the player begins with fifty thousand dollars and must maneuver each of the five group members, one at a time, through a scrolling tapestry of nemeses (Groupies, Sneaky Photographers, Shifty-eyed Promoters, and Stage Barriers). Contact with any of these costs time and/or money. Meeting up with loyal followers (Roadies and Managers) increases your cache. Reach the Scarab Escape Vehicle which occasionally passes through and you're safe.

The characters good and bad rain down slowly on the Journey musicians as long as you keep them at the bottom of the screen. The higher you climb, the faster they come at you.

At the end of the five waves, you are granted additional money and the game repeats. If your time runs out, the game ends.

JC: This is a unique and brilliant game, one of the best I've seen in quite some time.

Essentially it's *Kaboom!* in reverse, avoiding the falling objects instead of catching them. But there's more than just that: if you're on top of the screen — which is imperative if you're going to get the Escape Vehicle to appear — you've got to dash like a lunatic not only to avoid enemies, but to reach an ally as it passes. So-doing may cause you to collide with your adversaries, possibly costing you more money than you can earn back. Playing the top of the screen, every moment of *Journey/Escape* is like the eight-and-over levels of *Kaboom!*

The graphics are delightful, and the idea of having the Photographers become dangerous only when their flashbulbs pop adds appropriate glitz to this music business game. The accompanying music gives it personality, and the Journey-men are very nicely rendered. Though the success of this cartridge may be unfairly tied to the long-term legs of Journey itself, taken on its own the game is a work of videogaming art.

ECM: Before getting into my own rave about *Journey/Escape,* I want to elaborate on something Jim mentioned in his discussion of *Bugs.*

By and large, Data Age has cluttered the market with a lot of unnecessary games. *Encounter at L-5, Warplock,* and *Airlock* are all lousy variations on existing *Demon Attack, Missile Command* and *Pick Axe Pete* motifs. *SSSsnake* is okay but dull, and you know how I feel about *Bugs.* Business-wise, I can't blame the new company for trying to cash-in on popular themes. Creatively, however, I'd like to see them drop-kicked by the Incredible Hulk.

Journey/Escape softens my animosity. How one company can score so strong with this and miss so badly elsewhere is mind-boggling. I think it has to do with what our home videogame strategy staff of Michael Alexander, Samuel Lawrence, and Bill Bryans said at the end of their *Spider-man* coverage: the licensing of characters forces game creators to work harder to maintain the integrity of the subject matter; simultaneously, the demands of coming up with a scenario for subjects which can't be easily pigeon-holed in a videogame mold (you could hardly do something like *Superman* as a slide-and shoot) makes programmers dip into their imagination.

I'm a sucker for good theme games. The music-world framework sets this cartridge apart from the rest, and gameplay is non-stop *motion.* It's not murderous motion, or destructive motion: it's showbiz motion, life in the fast lane as it were. Psychologically, you gear up to — well, to *escape.*

A minor beef: I'm not as enamored of the graphics as Jim is. I accept the symbolism of big lips for Groupies, et al, but I think a little animation would have been nice. The musicians are the only figures that move, and sparsely. A few less Groupies, each tossing out kisses, might have enhanced the visuals.

But these complaints are minor, and will in no way hamper your enjoyment of *Journey/Escape.* Encore! There are also other characters the designers of this carriage might've drawn upon — in particular the engineers for sizzling graphics.

Bermuda Triangle

Object

You are guiding a mini-sub through a mysterious body of water known as the Bermuda Triangle. Beneath its churning waters are priceless artifacts — as well as giant squids, sharks, mines, and robotic drones, all bent on preventing you from retrieving these treasures by destroying your submarine. Blast them for points.

A research vessel passes across the surface every now and then. Rise to the surface and rendezvous with it, and your finds are added to the point tally. Accidentally link-up with an enemy vessel which also prowls the waves and you lose not only what you've discovered, but your sub as well.

JC: A pleasant if unextraordinary game, in which you ply through the waters horizontally, shooting at or ducking oncoming objects ala *Defender,* and *Chopper Command.*

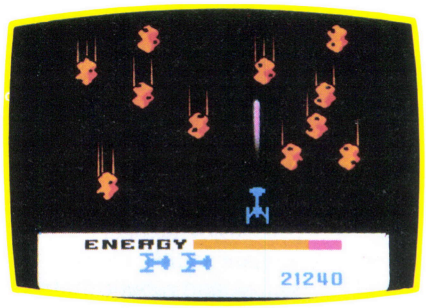
What makes this game slightly more appealing, are a tractor beam, which adds an element of vertical play; and the need to skip to the surface to unload your cargo.

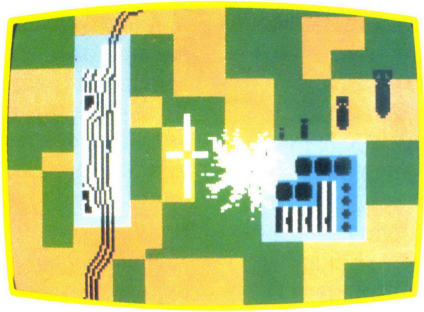
I'd rank this one above the aforementioned two 2600 cartridges.

ECM: I'd rank this one a major disappointment. Gameplay is okay, but given the exciting theme of the infamous, ghostly Bermuda Triangle, so much more could have been done.

Data Age's 2600 library still has only two cartridges worth owning, *Bugs* and *Journey/Escape;* check in next issue when we look at the company's latest offerings to see whether their track record's improving.

(Editor's note: Jim Clark and E.C. Meade have been given a free hand to comment on the new videogame releases as they see fit. Certain advertisers have informed us that negative reviews of their cartridges will result in a loss of advertising. Unlike some of our competitors, we'll live with that. We won't tell you who the strongarm companies are: just look around and see who isn't represented next issue.)





supergaming

Continued from page 21.

BEST 2600 GAME

Though *Space Invaders* made a strong showing for Atari, Activision walked off with the two top spots here.

The company's late-1982 slide-and-shoot *Megamania* was voted the best game for the Atari console/ ColecoVision expansion module. Its most commonly cited strengths were the various designs and patterns of the falling objects, excellent sound effects — especially the sizzling destruction of the gun — and the ratio of points-earned to fuel consumed operating the gun. Surprisingly, when the game first came out, several staffers complained that the falling bow ties, dice, et al didn't really resemble those items; today, those same critics say that gameplay is so strong the graphics don't matter to them.

Activision's *Pitfall* took second place — although, interestingly, it came in fourth on the Intellivision-compatible voting. The game scored heavily because of its novelty, challenge, and the two-pronged (underground/ overground) approach to Harry's quest for treasure. Once again, gameplay is obviously impressive enough to have buried some early mutterings among our writers that the animation and backgrounds were merely average.

Imagic's *Demon Attack* took third place.

Voting in the category of the most popular unit of all-time was surprisingly dominated by videogames which have been released over the past few months.

Voters were advised to be objective, forget that they've been playing *Warlords* and *Kaboom!* for years, to try and recall those first impressions of play.

However, familiarity seemed to breed, if not contempt, then perilously low votes for most standbys.

BEST INTELLIVISION GAME

There are four manufacturers making games for this console: Imagic, Coleco, Activision and, of course, Intellivision. Despite the competition, Intellivision won first place with its IntelliVoice masterpiece *B-17 Bomber.*

Yet, less than half the voters singled out the voice capacity in explaining their selection. Most agreed that the game won because of its unparalleled four-level play (a map of Europe to select sites, the detailed instrument panel, views from the pilot's chair as well as from three, six, nine, and twelve o'clock where the player must shoot down wonderfully sketched aircraft, and a chilling look through the bombay doors as you target and release your bombs).

In the audio-department, more voters applauded the very realistic roar of the engine and bullet sounds than the voice.

Imagic's *Demon Attack* came in very close to *B-17 Bomber,* graphics and gameplay winning it the runner-up spot. More than one voter said that it was the exciting last level featuring Pandemonium which really won them over.

BEST ODYSSEY GAME

Demon Attack was voted an extremely close third — one vote away from a tie — in this category. The game will not be available until May and, while our staff was widly impressed with the prototype, they wanted to see the final product before casting an important vote.

Thus, Odyssey won first and second place for its own console. The commercially successful *UFO* won handily over all other competitors, taking more than half the votes. Singled-out for praise were the options to ram or fire enemy vessels with your UFO, and the challenge of always attacking from the bottom so that debris from the exploding ships flew upward and took out other vessels. The graphics of the UFO short-circuiting were also lauded.

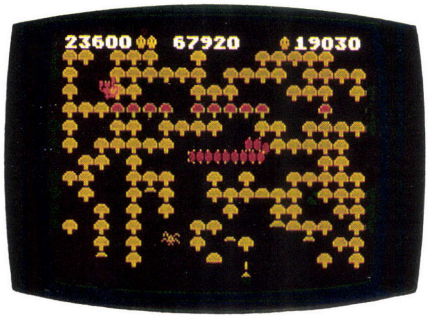
The late, lamented *K.C. Munchkin* took a few protest votes despite our ban on discontinued games, but the ambitious gobbler was represented in second-place by *K.C.'s Krazy Chase.* Indeed, had *K.C. Munchkin* not diluted the total of its heir, *Demon Attack* might not have placed such a close third.

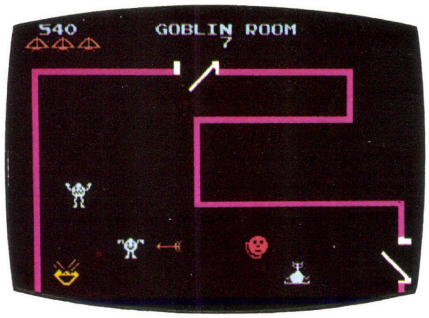
Though many of our staffers had originally criticized *K.C.'s Krazy Chase* as being a tad on the juvenile side, gameplay and the demanding strategy of just *when* to nibble those segments for optimum benefit won the hearts of videogamers ... No one seems to feel that the new, talking version has added much luster to gameplay.

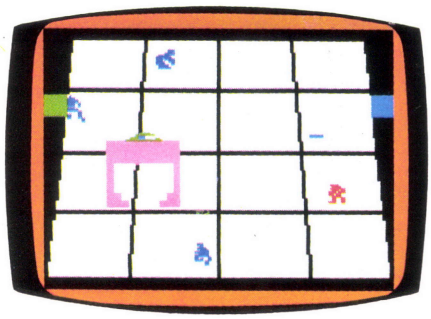
Much to our surprise, the Master Strategy board-and-cartridge series made only a token showing in this category (see BEST EDUCATIONAL GAME, below, for the other guest appearance), and that in the person of *Quest for the Rings.* The fact that most of our judges are hard-core videogamers as opposed to boardgamers may have had something to do with that.

By the way, each ballot contained a place for additional comments. Several of our voters utilized this space to remark that if Odyssey had relied more on the keyboard and less on the joysticks, some of the company's games would have had more variety and a higher level of enthusiasm among voters.

This is borne out by the fact that in this category, only eight of the fifty-odd Odyssey cartridges now on the market were even mentioned, a relatively low number. (They are, for the record, the first, second, and third place winners, the one defunct game, the Master Strategy game, *Blockout/ Breakdown, Pick Axe Pete,* and *Monkeyshines.* Surprisingly, not one game created for the Voice was among the chosen few.)







BEST 5200 GAME

Voting in this category must be qualified.

This Atari supersystem is three months old and, of the dozen cartridges now on the market, all are either home versions of arcade games — *Missile Command, Galaxian, Space Invaders, Pac-Man, Centipede, Defender,* etc. — or sports cartridges. There isn't a bad one in the lot.

Because *all* the graphics are good, all the gameplay faithful to the source, personal prejudices had a lot to do with voting. For example, most of the voters are arcade buffs and not sports buffs: comparing *Soccer* to *Defender* was thus not an easy task — which, incidentally, was why a separate sports category was created for systems with a great many good sports cartridges.

Centipede took the prize as best game for the 5200. Ironically, voters who do not like trakball games found themselves getting into *Centipede* for the first time because of the option of using the superb 5200 joystick.

The most common accolades heaped on *Centipede* were the fact that, because of the different mushroom patterns and way the face of the game changes with every different shot, you must be constantly alert; also applauded was the ultra-quick response of the gun and rapid-fire at close range.

Pac-Man took second place, the old standby showing unparallelled devotion among fans.

Defender came in a remote third with *Space Invaders* and *Missile Command* just making the list. A post-voting, informal poll showed that these placed relatively low because: while *Defender* is a fine game in its own right, it is the least faithful translation of an arcade game to the 5200 format; *Space Invaders* is just not as novel or challenging as it was years back; and *Missile Command,* again, a great adaptation, just didn't have the following the others had.

BEST COLECOVISION GAME

There were a few raised eyebrows among devotees on the staff and off when *Zaxxon* didn't run away with this — and, in fact, came in third. It was an easy third, but surprising in that *Zaxxon* is usually pointed to as indicative of the "class act" that ColecoVision represents. It's thought that *Zaxxon*'s higher placement in the category of BEST ARCADE ADAPTATION may have cost it votes here. *Turbo,* which came in fourth and is magnificent in its own right, actually took some criticism in its capacity as an adaptation, but placed high because of the novelty and effectiveness of the steering wheel/accelerator expansion modules.

Having said that *Zaxxon* weakened its chances here because of the arcade category, it's ironic that arcade games won first and second place. However, it must be pointed out that these never received the exposure or earned a following to match that of *Zaxxon.*

Venture was voted the best ColecoVision cartridge. For the record, it also placed fourth in our BEST CARTRIDGE category. Frenetic, individualistic, very demanding gameplay was given as the primary reason for the selection, though a large majority of voters also cited the superb musical accompaniment and the delightful design of the cyclopes, skeletons, and other nemeses as having influenced their balloting.

Ladybug took second place, though barely, over *Zaxxon.* This wasn't just spillover affection from *Pac-Man* fans for this eat-the-dot motif: voters pointed to the revolving doors and distinctive, ever-changing scoring opportunities as having influened their selection.

With only half of ColecoVision's announced cartridges currently on the market, it will be interesting to see how these games fare against future Vista winners.

BEST GAME BASED ON A NON-ARCADE MEDIUM

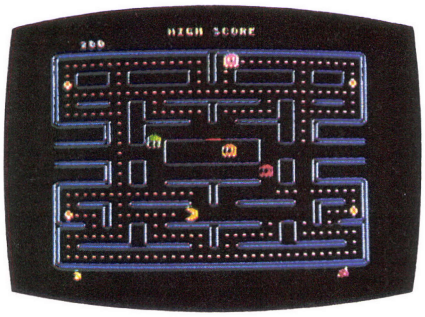
This category gave us some of our least-decisive results. First, there were the movie adaptations: the two *Tron* games, *Fantastic Voyage, Megaforce, Alien,* etc.; then there were the adventure or comic strip characters, such as King Kong, Spider-man and Superman, while the realm of youth-oriented properties gave us Intellivision's two *Electric Company* games, plus ColecoVision's twin Smurf cartridges — among others.

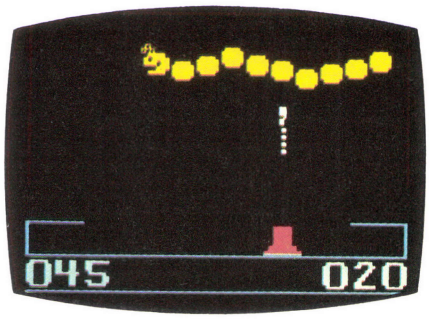
Knowing that there are such hot licenses as Strawberry Shortcake, James Bond, had many voters wanting to put this category off until the end of the year to make it more complete — but then, we'd only have been able to vote on the games released in 1983. After all, it would hardly do to say that "such-and-such" are the best games licensed from another medium, and then have *Lord of the Rings* or *The Incredible Hulk* appear and blow them out of the water.

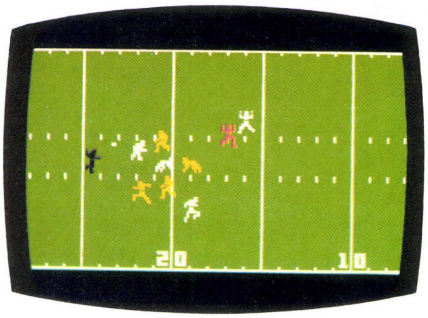
As it stands, two games did place first and second, though voting was so evenly spread over the other tie-ins that third place had three ties *(Fantastic Voyage, Tron: Deadly Discs,* and *Journey/Escape),* and fourth place two.

Parker Brothers million-seller, 2600 compatible *The Empire Strikes Back* took first place. Fidelity to the motion picture was a factor in our voting, though embellishments such as the ability to land the snowspeeder and refuel, the fore- and background landscapes, the ability to hover around the AT-ATs and sting like a bee, and the *Star Wars* theme music all influenced the award.

Superman came in second, despite what were roundly acknowledged as "wanting" graphics. Several voters remarked that the game has "charm," and were highly complimentary of the many cityscapes Atari packed into this 2600 cartridge, as well as the







countless ways Superman can be navigated through those panels. The fact that this is a game which pits only one player against the clock (ie, against him or herself) was also judged to be an asset.

(A complete guide to conquering *Superman* ran in our first issue.)

BEST ARCADE ADAPTATION

Once the 5200 was pit against ColecoVision — the systems in which arcade adaptations have inarguably had their finest showcases — voting got very tight.

Affection for the 5200 *Pac-Man* helped win it first place, despite the fact that the home screen is still wider than it is tall. It beat *Centipede* because, in the opinion of many voters, while *Pac-Man* gameplay may not be as inherently exciting, the 5200 cartridge managed to bring to the home screen the personality of the gobbler and the ghosts.

However, *Centipede* was also topped by *Zaxxon* — but only in the sense of being a faithful arcade adaptation (see BEST GAME, below). Voters who did not even care for *Zaxxon* in the arcades voted for it here, commending Coleco's programmers for bringing the incredible graphics home with only a minimal sacrifice in terms of gameplay.

Centipede earned itself third place, ColecoVision's own edition of *Donkey Kong* fourth.

For the record, the pinball-like games were included in this category, though none received any votes.

BEST EDUCATIONAL GAME

This is a fairly limited category at present, and there really was no contest here. Although games such as Atari's *Hangman* and the two *Electric Company* cartridges got token nods, the runaway winner was *Sid the Spellbinder.* No one praised the game for its originality; rather, it scored because of its full use of the Odyssey keyboard and Voice for instructional purposes.

Conversely, *Word Zapper* from U.S. Games' Vidtec line squeaked past Odyssey's *Nimble Numbers Ned* because it managed to disguise its educational value beneath layers of very appealing action.

In case you're not familiar with this cartridge, children must use the Word Zapper ship to shoot letters scrolling past, nailing them in perfect order and thus matching words which had been flashed on-screen before the action began. Simultaneously, they must fend off an attack on the Word Zapper ship from Bonkers, Zonkers, and the dreaded Doomsday.

Odyssey's *The Great Wall Street Fortune Hunt* was mentioned by several voters as the best educational game for adults, though it did not get sufficient votes to compete with the youth-oriented games.

BEST 2600 SPORTS

Voting was very heavily split in this division.

All of the new Atari RealSports *(Football, Baseball,* and *Volleyball)* and M Network Super Challenge sports *(Football* and *Baseball)* took votes, as did various other games such as Activision's *Tennis* and Atari's old *Video Olympics* cartridge. Thus, the winners do not represent a clear majority.

There was, in fact, a tie for first place. The Super Challenge *Baseball* and RealSports *Baseball* actually tied *twice.* At first, we had resolved to have no ties and sent the two back in a separate ballot: they came back tied. The fact that neither of the two companies' football cartridges placed near the top is indicative of the fact that, in the judgement of the voters, they are less successful adaptations of these games than the baseball cartridges and, in and of themselves, offer less exciting gameplay than games such as *Tennis* and Atari's *Basketball,* both of which placed higher (five and six) in the voting.

Second place was a surprise. Several voters had expressed the opinion that a racing game like Activision's *Dragster* or *Grand Prix* would take the prize for originality and graphics, respectively — or that the popular new *Sky Jinks* would make an athletic showing.

Not so! The cathartic, beautifully animated Activision *Boxing* won second place, even though it has not been one of the company's more successful cartridges in the marketplace.

Atari's *Video Olympics* came in third for its variety and gameplay, despite the *Pong* -like graphics, and *Dragster did* manage to land fourth.

BEST INTELLIVISION SPORTS

There was no contest here for the number one spot. The perennial favorite *NFL Football* blitzed all the competition, winning more than half the votes. The ability to program plays, pass realistically, and maneuver the players effectively were given as overwhelming assets; the only drawback cited was that it takes two or three hours just to get the feel of the game.

Another surprise, here: none of the other team sports made it into the top three. Second place went to *Horse Racing,* which was complimented not only as being one of the great party games, but for its faithfulness to the experience of going to the track ie, performing to the odds with the usual smattering of upsets, providing different length races on varying surfaces, allowing for exactas, and permitting the players to bet-away without losing a cent.

Boxing took third place, barely edging out *U.S. Ski Team Skiing* and *PGA Golf.* This was not viewed as a bad reflection on any of the three games, or those individual sports. All were deemed superbly evocative of their real-life counterparts.

The "Vista" Awards continue next issue with sports, graphics, and overall best home videogame citations.

"BUT CAPTAIN KIRK HAS ONE!"

Even if you don't have a four hundred crewmember starship to run, there are many good reasons to own a computer.

by Martin Levitan

I remember when I uttered those fateful words, "Fine. Okay, you convinced me. Wrap it up."

I handed over the check and the salesperson gushed, "Congratulations. You've just purchased a nice addiction to your family."

Slip of the tongue I thought, recoiling slightly.

The salesperson slid the box across the countertop then smiled. "Be seeing you."

There was something ominously familiar in those words. It took me a while, but on the drive home I remembered where I'd heard that expression: on the classic TV show *The Prisoner.*

The Prisoner — humankind as captives of impersonalized technology. Victims of progress. Prisoners of art-crushing, spirit-sapping, initiative-robbing machinery.

In the cold gray light of that first weekend with my purchase, I stared at it sitting innocuously on the dining room table. I snickered nervously, *"Is* this thing going to turn me into a zombie? Have I fallen for all the hype and media push? Now that I'm the proud owner of a personal home computer, did I *really* need one?"

There are eight million stories similar to mine, people who have experienced that same anticipation-cum-terror as they stared for the first time at the keyboard of their new computer. Billions will undoubtedly share those qualms in the future.

Yet, some months after the fact I can report with confidence — indeed, with rapture — that buying a computer was a wise decision.

Though videogames have traditionally been a stronghold of male wish-fulfillment, men* and *women benefit from the personal computer.

A decade ago, no one in their wildest imaginings would have thought they'd be turning their spare room or kitchen into a part-time computer lab. But according to *Business Week*, that's exactly what's happened.

"Since 1976," the magazine reports, "the market for personal computers has grown from scratch to $6.1 billion in worldwide sales this year. By 1986 sales are expected to climb to $21 billion."

Much of the growth in the home market stems from the emergence of videogames as a national love affair. In the wake of this explosion, kids and grownups alike quickly discovered the more sophisticated computer games, after which educators jumped in with teaching aids and "courseware" to capitalize on the charisma of the computer screen.

Before anyone realized what was happening, these enthusiasts had found a multitude of tasks for which *any* homeowner could use computers.

Simultaneously, technology brought the computing power of a one million dollar machine down to a price tag of two thousand dollars. More recently, basic computing has become available for household use at a cost of from one hundred to five hundred dollars.

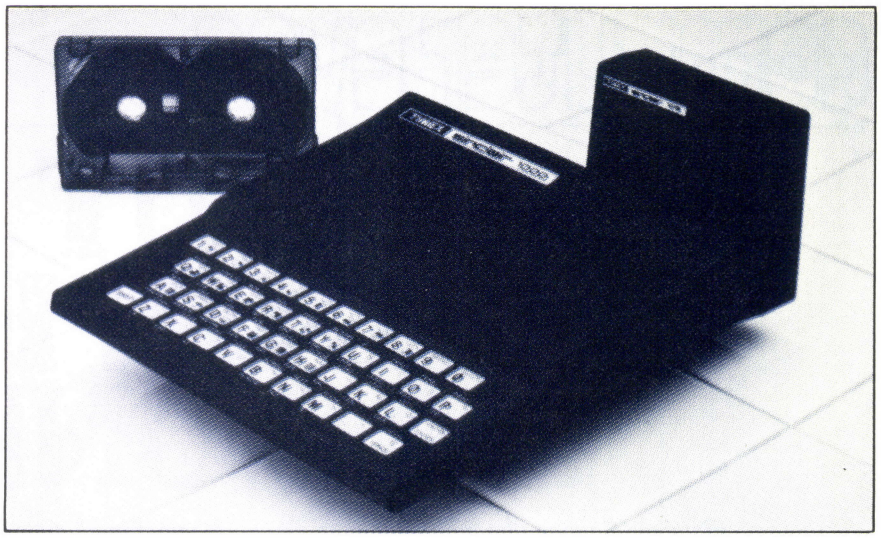
But the big question, the downright *nasty* question which many people still ask is just *how* useful is the home computer? What can the *average* person do with it? Isn't it really just one more big-ticket gadget we don't need? Or as one critic summed it up, are computers "a silly distraction, or the next great home tool?"

Let's examine the question.

A general purpose computer must be programmed to be useful. That in itself sounds intimidating to most people, but what it means is that you've got to put a disk or tape into the computer which will cause its dormant circuits to snap-to and prepare to perform certain functions. Those functions are determined by what's been stored in the given program, whether it's *Spider-man* or *The States and Their Capitals.*

These programs can be bought — canned, like a videogame cartridge — or you can write them. Writing a program is not as impossible as it sounds: it's simply a matter of typing in the parameters of what you want the computer to do every time that particular tape or disk is used.

Thus, just to point out the difference between a full-fledged computer and videogame system, the latter lets you play games others have invented, while the computer lets you play your own design. The difference may not be as severe as, say, paint-by-numbers vs. the work done by Titian, but there *is* an element of creativity involved in programming your own. More on that later.



The TS 1000, with its buttonless "membrane" keyboard, sold 600,000 units in 1982. A more powerful version is coming this spring.

Most of the non-game programs the average consumer will use are of the plug-it-in variety. Let's state right upfront that they usually don't do anything you couldn't have figured out with a paper and pencil.

What, then, is so special about a computer?

A number of things. First, it makes routine and mundane tasks like keeping a checkbook pass more quickly, in a more orderly fashion, and — let's face it, computers are more fun to use than a leaky Bic.

Ah, but are they cost-justified?

That depends upon the value you place on your time. And how clever you are. How would *you* go about making your house more energy efficient, compare budgets vs. inflation, install a security system, etc., etc., etc.? You'd probably call in experts, sit for hours with legal pads, and call in more experts, respectively. And you'd spend, in the process, more than three or four times the cost of a simple computer.

But we get ahead of ourselves. Back to the checkbook.

The amount of effort required to keep a checkbook by computer is roughly the same as keeping it by hand. However, the computer rewards you with a balanced checkbook, and more. Touching a key allows you to see how this month's spending pattern compares to that of last month. Or the month before that. Or eighteen months before that.

Checkbooks are no big deal, you say? You're not impressed that this new member of the family can keep financial records? Fair enough. Let's poke around and see what else it can do.

The computer can save energy by controlling your home's heating and cooling systems. It can help to evaluate solar projects and weatherization options, or store recipes and help devise diets to suit the nutritional needs of the family. With the proper attachments, it can turn lights on and off while you're away — in much more sophisticated fashion than those little gadgets you plug into the wall which wouldn't fool anybody intent on robbing the place — monitor smoke and burglar alarms, even call the police or fire department.

Name any tool which can do all of the above and also educate your children. Not *only* educate them, but do it in a way which will leave 'em begging for more!

Nor should we gloss over adult education. With the proper communications accessories, a home computer can link you into international data banks filled with information on almost any subject you might want. Within the next year or two, it will help you do your shopping and banking from home, as computers are presently doing in test markets around the nation.

Nor should we forget the job market. Even if you have no interest in computers, think about the future. You or your kids are going to be entering a job market full of computer hardware. Want to lose out on employment because you don't know a keyboard from Kahlua Pie? You didn't hesitate to learn tennis to get ahead in the office; why not learn computers?

The brand new Atari 1200XL is the latest, sleekest, and fastest-selling addition to that company's catalogue of home computer hardware

As I mentioned earlier, you don't have to spend thousands of dollars to get a basic computer. The cheapest preassembled home computer currently on the market is the TS (Timex-Sinclair) 1000. Carrying a one to three hundred dollar price tag, it will perform most of the tasks done by much larger and more expensive systems, though in not quite as sophisticated a manner.

(For $49.95 you can add a unit which will allow for more advanced work; it isn't necessary, but at least you can buy the computer and feel as though it won't become instantly obsolete.)

Most Timex-Sinclair prepackaged software is available for under thirty dollars. We've given over most of the space in the following software primer to that beginner's unit. However, whether you get the TS1000 or an Atari 400 or 800, an Apple, a TRS-80, or any of the other computers on the market — all of which we'll be covering individually over the next few issues — here is a brief review of the software which is presently available.

Games

Games are the most relaxing use for home computers. The graphics are better than most videogame systems, and the range of titles is far more extensive.

Home computers are strongest in the adventure and strategy categories, games such as *Ulysses and the Golden Fleece* and *Time Zone* which were covered in previous issues. There are thousands of games on the market, of which the largest number are Apple-compatible. Prices range from twenty to one hundred dollars apiece, depending upon the game and the system.

For beginners, the games available in the TS1000 format include *The Flight Simulator, Chess, Backgammon and Dice, The Gambler* (blackjack and slot games), *The Cube Game, Grimm's Fairy Trails* (sic), and *The Mixed Game Bag.* All sell for under twenty dollars, some for less than ten.

Finance

The TS1000 has a surprisingly good cross-section of home finance programs to help you organize and analyze your life.

The Organizer, a general-purpose information storage and retrieval program, emphasizes user friendliness (ie, it's simple to use) and detailed visual display. It helps you store names, addresses, phone numbers, birthdays, anniversary dates, and so on.

The Budgeter can keep track of your personal expenditures in eighteen different categories, such as food, clothing, rent/mortgage, medicine, education, and many more.

The Loan/Mortgage Amortizer helps you to compare the costs of loans from different banks — loans you're sure to need when you're hooked on computers and upgrade to a more powerful unit.

The Checkbook Manager stores transactions and sorts them in useful ways. You can hold up to 3,600 transactions on a single tape.

The Coupon Manager, as the name implies, is for coupon-clippers. This one's a real pip. It has the capacity to tell you what each coupon is for, where it's honored, the date through which it's valid, and lists each by store or type. Remember when we mentioned cost-effectiveness a while back? A family of four can shave twenty percent or more from their grocery bill with a program like this.

The Car Pooler, The Stamp Collector, and *The Stock Option Analyzer* are also TS1000 programs. All of these programs sell for between fifteen and twenty dollars. One can purchase them separately or, instead, buy a single program which stores, retrieves, and processes all of this data in separate files.

Want some other areas in which you might use these "data-base programs" (that is, programs which use the computer to do what you formerly did on index cards or in notebooks)? How about keeping track of your videotape library, storing data on family trees, compiling sports statistics to dominate that office pool, creating personal dictionaries, keeping a current grocery list (with notations about when the milk and yogurt expire), cataloguing menus, maintaining stock market histories, and even updating "little black books."

Educational Programs

These can be used to supplement a child's formal education or help an adult keep up in his or her studies. Most of these programs are in the form of drill and practice, simulation, or computer-assisted instruction. Prices range from thirty dollars to $150.

This is the biggie. There's no escaping the fact that children, today, are video-oriented. Parents and educators rail about this, but it's like death and taxes: the TV is not going to go away. What the computer does is use this interest to feed kids some education.

Many teachers have already recognized the value of computer literacy. For one thing, kids who use computers quickly see the necessity for precise communication, do not have to be reminded that spelling, punctuation, and grammar "count." For example, if you've got a file code-named "irresistible," and you keep punching in "irresistable," you're going to stare at a blank screen for an awful long time. Many adults would benefit from exercising some of those skills.

Schools have always had trouble teaching "real" problem-solving skills. Computers provide an environment full of real-world problem solving, simulations of actual tasks to-be-accomplished, from building a nuclear reactor to writing a resume and having the computer hire you or not. There are real-life constraints with which to deal, complicated by the dilemma of many possible solutions. These are slices of life situations which can't be as effectively communicated or experienced in a textbook, or in a self-conscious, high-pressure classroom situation.

For slow and fast students alike, computers permit them to work at their own pace without fear of being left behind. Indeed, in the case of slower students, mastering computers is itself a means of boosting often fragile self-respect.

Education aside, computers have demonstrably broken the hypnotic spell of television. Computing is not passive entertainment, it's interactive. What's more, it bonds parents with their children, gives families a dynamic opportunity to share in an activity, in problem-solving, game-playing, in mastering technology. Families can still sit around a *Monopoly* board or cross words over *Scrabble*. You don't have to sacrifice one for the other. Just remember, despite what Bette Davis said in this magazine two issues back, that's a two way street.

There are hundreds of educational programs on the market, and their quality and subject matter varies greatly.

Environment Control

The last category is one which can really save you a bundle. By hooking your computer to special control devices and sensors, you can not only monitor heating and security systems, but run appliances as well.

At the moment, the cost of the hardware necessary to do this is beyond the reach of the average computer user. Give it a few years and you'll ever wonder how you allotted oil without your handy little keyboard.

These prepackaged programs we've been discussing aren't always easy to fit into categories. For example, I leave it to you to place one called *Eliza*, which turns your computer into a psychotherapist.

There there's *Dietary Analysis Program* which scrutinizes your daily food consumption for vitamin, mineral, and caloric content.

Still other computer packages promise to perfect your pitch, teach you to read music and, that done, help you start writing tunes. Someone even rigged an Apple to rock the baby's cradle everytime she cried.

Rube Goldberg would be proud. I know my wife was.

People who work with computers gain many intangible benefits as well. They learn the self-confidence that comes from making an hitherto mysterious machine do their bidding. This is important, for as technology plays an increasingly more important role in our lives, we need to develop a sense that we control machines rather than vice versa. The fact is, Arthur C. Clarke notwithstanding, computers really *do* behave just as you instruct them.

What about that element of creativity we mentioned earlier. Some people can't draw or haven't an ear for music. The computer can serve as a paint brush or piano, be a tool and tutor both. This isn't to say that we should take an axe to musical instruments or toss our easels out the window. It means that computers can take some of the scare out of *those* pursuits as well.

If all of the above fails to convince you, consider this: if you don't start using computers, all those big corporations are going to stop making them. And then, like the zeppelin, computers will become extinct. You may not want to make your own life easier and fuller, but think of the future. Whatever will Captain Kirk *do* if, through our neglect, he ends up facing the twenty-third century with nothing more than a pocket calculator?

Next issue: the Atari computers.

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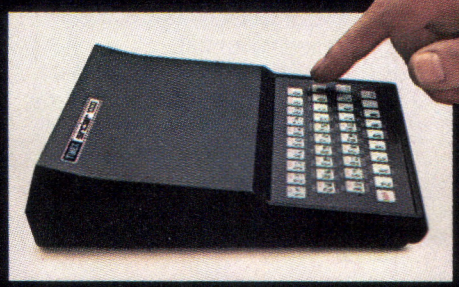

TIMEX COMPUTERS

THE POWER IS WITHIN YOUR REACH

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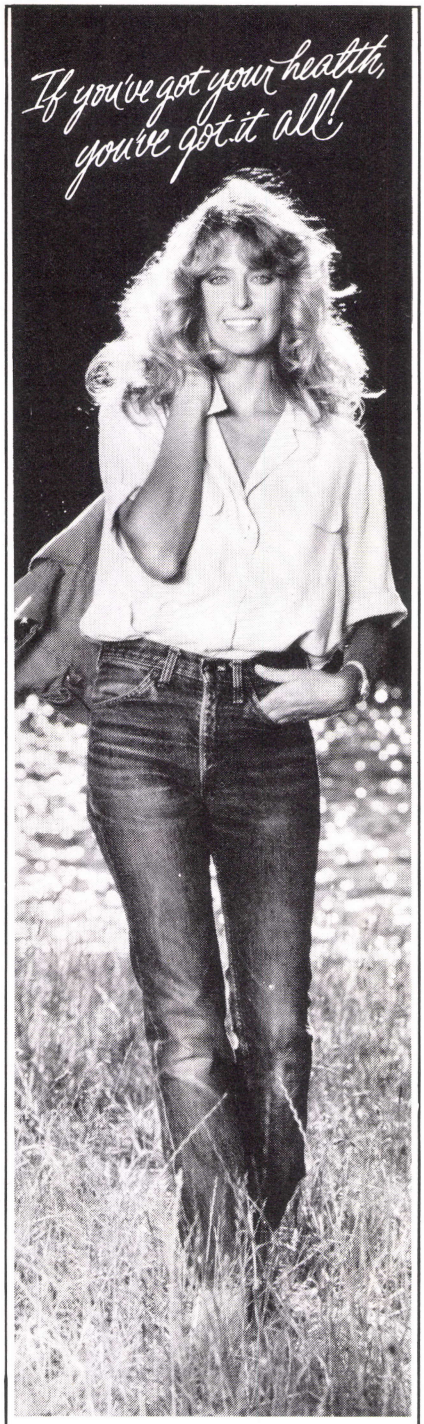

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star words

Kirk Douglas

Actor and Director

I'm amazed by technology — computers, going to the moon, even the *telephone.* I just wish I didn't have to ask a twelve year old how they work."

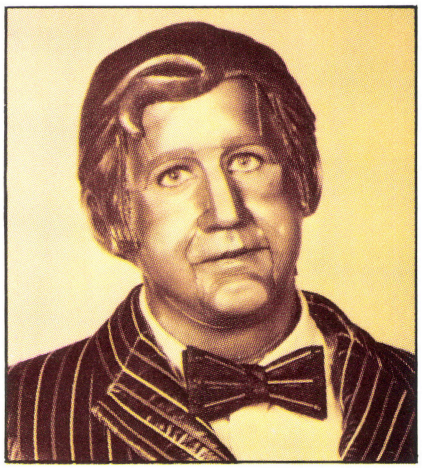
Cleavon Little

Star of *Blazing Saddles* and *Greased Lightning*

"I'm a *Pac-Man* freak. I love videogames and find them very challenging. I really want to get more into them, though having the time is a problem.

"Actually, we're all kind of obliged to get to know them better since videogames are a part of the future. They're an *exciting* part, though a little frightening because there are so many technological areas which are as yet untapped, unexplored; I have the feeling that from now on something new and monumental is going to be discovered every few months.

"That's why it's important for parents to expose their children to these games, and to do them together. They've got to show kids that there's more to life than games, — but that the games, and the computer, are an important part of the future in terms of education and recreation."



Andy Kaufman

Comedian, Film Star, and Wrestler

"I used to love *Space Invaders,* but there are now so many games you can't tell them apart. The only one I *really* like today is *Galaga.* It's a beautiful and difficult game. To me, *Defender* and *Stargate* are boring. Anything where you travel horizontally and drop bombs is as unexciting to me as *Pac-Man* — and that's *dull.* There's no spirit there.

"When I think back, I guess *Asteroids* was really the breakthrough game. When that came out, whether by design or by accident, someone had discovered that there are really two kinds of players: those who like scattered, abstract, disorderly games, and those who like them fairly linear. I think the former have taken over from the *Space Invaders* types.

"As for other games I've tried, I don't like *Donkey Kong.* It's a real drag, with all the music and waiting for the gorilla to get to the top of the building. *Frogger* I liked for a while, but that got boring too.

"Other games I like, *Space Panic* and *Astro Fighter,* have action and beauty, but they never went anywhere; the games I *didn't* like became popular. Maybe that means something.

"Obviously, I'm all for videogames, but I don't think they'll ever replace wrestling. There's nothing, not even a great videogame, to compare with the thrill of getting into the ring. Even if you lose you feel good, which isn't the case with videogames."

RAMblings

reviewed by Dale Rupert

No time warps, attacking demons, or sinister spiders to challenge you here. Nothing but sheer athletic prowess will help you attain the Olympic gold medal.

The game is *Decathlon,* a simulation of the ten Olympic Games events in which competitors vie for the title, "World's Greatest Athlete." This program is written for the IBM Personal Computer by Timothy Smith, and produced by Microsoft. Similar versions are available for other computers including the TRS-80 and the Apple II. The program is in machine language — which means you just poke it in the slot and use it — and comes on a disk, with a forty-eight-page instruction booklet, for thirty-five dollars.

The events include the 100-meter dash, long jump, shot put, high jump, 400-meter dash, 110-meter hurdles, discus throw, pole vault, javelin throw, and the 1500-meter run. The keys to success are dexterity, coordination, timing, and, of course, practice — lots of it.

You score one thousand points if you can match the world's record for an event. The winner of the Decathlon need not be the best in all events, but a poor performance in one event must be compensated by excellence in others.

Before the actual competition, you may practice the events. You run the 100-meter and 400-meter dashes by furiously pressing two keys. The start-

ing gun appears. Then "On your Marks. Set. Go," and with a toot from the computer; you're off! Don't anticipate and start too soon: three false starts and you score no points for the event.

The two toughest events are the 110-meter hurdles and the pole vault. To survive the hurdles, you must establish a rhythm of running and leaping. Leaping late and clipping the top of a hurdle, knocking it down, hurts your pace and your time. Miss two hurdles completely and the field judge disqualifies you.

The pole vault requires the manipulation of five different keys. You must run, set the pole, pull to a handstand, and release the pole, all with clockwork precision. That's the way it's *supposed* to be anyway. More frequently you fall backward, the computer objectively responding "Not enough forward momentum." The physics of motion is realistically applied throughout this program.

The instructions are clearly shown at the start of each event. The animation, graphics, and sound in this program are excellent. You actually *sag* into the foam pit after clearing the high jump bar; the safety cage rattles and vibrates when your wild discus throw slams into it; the screen shifts from a close-up to a bird's eye view as the javelin whistles down the field.

The only imperfection in the program is minor. The menu of events is difficult to read on a color television because of the colors used. (There's no problem on a high resolution monochrome TV.) All other displays and instructions are very clear.

This is a challenging and rewarding computer game. It conveys the spirit of the Olympic Games better than words can describe. The program is artistically written and finely tuned.

Try a few practice runs in your spare time. Or get a group together and have a field day.

Microsoft *Decathlon* gives you some genuine world's records to break. If you work at it, the gold medal could be yours. Bruce Jenner, look out!

The Human Fly

This Apple-compatible game is fun, if you overlook a number of annoyances. Computer Programs Unlimited (9710-24th Ave SE, Everett, WA, 98204) has a viable game here, though a little more testing and a tad more originality would have helped.

The object is to move a figure up a building, avoiding various obstacles during the ascent. Gameplay is more similar to *Crazy Climber* than naggingly to *Donkey Kong,* in that you go from window to window and from left to right to duck objects, and can't get a grip on closed windows.

The nemeses are birds, scaffolding, earthquakes and, as in *Crazy Climber* falling flower pots, gorillas, and closing windows. There's also an ally, a balloon, which, if you manage to plant your body squarely upon it, will escort you ten floors up.

Conceptually, the program is solid, if not flamboyant. The graphics are nothing special, with two exceptions: the *very* fluid animation of the Human Fly tumbling earthward and hitting the street, splattering gore all over the pavement; and the earthquake, which causes some very realistic permutations onscreen.

(You survive the earthquake by pecking at the space bar. This stabilizes the daredevil until the tremors desist.)

The random nature of the game is appealing. You are just as likely to start out with two earthquakes as with a balloon. However, we played this game on two different Apples and the drawbacks were the same both times: the Human Fly just doesn't react quickly enough to your typed instructions.

Simple taps of the "W" and "I" keys in quick succession are supposed to send the Fly scurrying to the top. They do — except when there's danger. As soon as the bird entered the screen, we fingered away and went absolutely nowhere or proceeded with annoying fatigue. That's not the way the game's supposed to work.

Another problem is that each time you slip or are knocked off the building, you've got to wait for the figure to fall slowly to the ground, splatter, and be told, by the computer, that you

Continued on page 69.

Continued from page 42
might remember from long ago. Although the kiddie ride industry started in the 1930s, all that survived until recently was the mechanical version of the rocking horse.

"That was nickel and dime stuff," LaForce recalls. "Recently rides have gone up to a quarter and we started the importation of very fancy European rides. The Europeans have always been way ahead of us when it comes to child-oriented amusement parks and attractions. The whole orientation of family entertainment was always much more apparent there than here.

"The biggest innovation they brought us was the introduction of hydraulics some eighteen months ago. It took the industry by storm. Now the child can control his ride, making it go up, down, rotate 270 degrees, and make sound effects with a press of a button."

Kiddie Rides USA have prospered by the new technology, making its Hydraulic *Scout Ball* and *Battlestar Galacticar* into best sellers while depending upon such popular old staples as the *Helicopter* and *Red Baron* to maintain the cash flow. Refusing to rest on their laurels, they have also introduced a new wrinkle: hydraulic rides complete with video.

"The Hydraulic *Space Raider* has outer space scenes running inside as the child rides," LaForce explains. "We feel that almost all our major rides will soon be incorporating video. But there's a lot more coming. In fact, at the last trade show, many more physical games were making a revival. Like the *Whack-A-Mole*."

LET THEM EAT PIZZA

The *Whack-A-Mole* is turning out to be the sleeper arcade hit of the eighties. And when they say hit, they mean it. For the game starts with a mallet and a set of holes. Out of these holes can come hearty plastic moles as well as bats, snakes, sharks, jokers, and even unidentifiable monsters. The object of the game is simply to whack the holesters before they slip back down into their hiding places.

The game is the brainchild of Bob's Space Racers Company, a family run business that started in a Daytona Beach, Florida garage and blossomed into a large manufacturing plant supplying both carnivals and arcades. "Things really started going strong in 1974," recalls General Manager Jack Mendes. "That was about the time most amusement parks started putting game areas in. Also at that point, restaurants were getting more and more into games — especially our group participation games."

Those two ingredients — restaurants and physical exertion machines — combined to create a renaissance for the novelty games industry. With all the preceding games, the player is either whacking moles or shooting water or pumping a handle or rolling a ball or twisting a rod or whatever else might be required. But the important thing is, they are doing it nose-to-nose or ear-to-ear with their competitors in a format that is not as focus-concentrated as a compact, underlit videogame. In other words, there is some kind of competition — some sort of real human involvement.

And the center of all this interaction are the theme amusement restaurants popping up all over the country. Whether it is Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza Time Theater or Show Biz or the Castle Golf and Games establishments, all these restaurants are stressing one thing: good clean family fun.

And with that will come the novelty games ... the other attractions which may soon become much more than mere curiosities from another era. They very well may become the in thing of tomorrow. Ladies and Gentlemen, get your whack-a-mole mallets ready.

Oldies are getting new life like the Skee-Ball and the shooting gallery games.

U.N.C.L.E.

Continued from page 39

tion company, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, independent producer Michael Sloan has made a two hour television film entitled *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.: The 15 Years Later Affair.*

The plot is essentially "The Wrath of THRUSH." More than a decade after the evil organization disbanded because of Solo and Kuryakin, a villain named Sepheran reopens shop with new and extremely deadly computer hardware to fulfill the company's mission, as well as eliminate Napoleon and Illya; THRUSH is, after all, the Technological Hierarchy for the Removal of Undesirables and the Subjugation of Humanity.

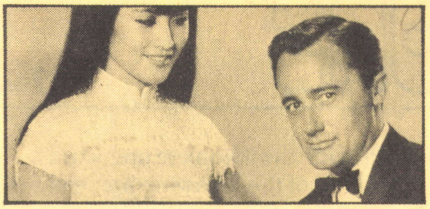
Robert Vaughn and David McCallum, the stars of the series and the new telefilm, returned for the sake of nostalgia. However, McCallum had trouble slipping back into the classic spy persona after so many intervening dramatic roles.

"The first day on the set was a little dodgey," technical advisor Robert Short admits. "But after that, the chemistry between Robert and David was exactly the same. It was almost frightening."

That chemistry was aided by a strange and clever twist in the plot. Solo, the veteran womanizer, runs his own computer firm while Illya, the inveterate scientist, had hit it big in the fashion business.

"In the very first draft of the script, it was the other way round," Short reveals. "It was David McCallum who suggested they switch. Which is fitting when you consider that David and the Kuryakin character made the turtleneck sweater a fashion staple almost single-handedly. Although they never mention it, you get the feeling Napoleon and Illya are looking at each other like 'didn't we get each other's jobs?' "

Their job now is to stop THRUSH and to do so required greater effort on both their parts than ever before. "There's more action and more creative fight scenes than in any recent 007 film," Short maintains, "and although Robert and David haven't been doing that sort of thing lately, it's as if they had never quit. Here, on the set, it's the debonair but deadly Napoleon Solo and the eccentric but inventive Illya Kuryakin back again.



It's great!"

MGM has only given producer/scripter Sloan permission for a one-shot TV Movie, but the company has made it clear that they will not be deaf to a fervent audience response. *The 15 Years Later Affair* may not be the dead end for the new U.N.C.L.E. as it initially appeared. As far as Robert Short is concerned, when the show airs this spring, no one will be disappointed.

close up

Continued from page 14

just use it. Computers are the same way. Computers don't require that everyone understand how to program. The basics of a computer haven't changed. We've known how to build them for a couple of hundred years."

Whoa, Mike! A couple of *hundred* years?

"The first computers were mechanical machines. Slide rules. The abacus. Mechanical adding machines. Conceptually, a computer is merely an instrument of data storage. The first electronic machines that were built in the 1940s took the equivalent amount of space of a three bedroom house to store, and they wouldn't do very much. They would add, subtract, divide, and multiply. But we made progress, not because we discovered how to compute and program, but because we figured out how to build the machinery smaller and lighter for greater data storage and faster computation."

If Mike Lounge is enthusiastic about computers, one reason may be that computers made the space shuttle possible. "It could not fly without computers" he says. "The computers tell you where you are and how fast you're going and what to do with the controls and rocket motors. There's no way that a person could gather enough information or process it fast enough to solve those problems."

Lounge is enthusiastic about the space shuttle, proud of his country's accomplishments.

To explore the frontier. To be a construction worker among the stars. It's videogames . . . for real.

slither

Continued from page 47

and obliterate.

As it scoots across the screen, the Monster will also leave a fresh block of Trees in its path — similar to the function of the Flea in *Centipede.* Shoot it without delay, or you may find your Gun hemmed-in.

If the Monster gets to the other side of the screen when depositing Trees, move the Gun as close as possible to the foliage, then hold down the Fire button while moving the Trak-Ball back and forth. Even if you don't succeed in clearing away every bit of each Tree, you'll still shoot away a high percentage of them, thus leaving clear space from which to shoot at Snakes.

Invisibility

Once in a while, after killing the head of a Snake, the rest of the body will suddenly become invisible. All you'll be able to see when this happens are pairs of glowing eyes. Above all, remember that you *cannot* move *between* the sets of eyes. Blast away invisible Snakes as soon as possible.

Slither is one of those games which has not been among the topmost-grossing arcade attractions. However, it is a marvelous, fast-paced game which has been a steady moneymaker since its inception. People constantly seem to be "discovering" it.

Or, to put it in the lingo of the film biz, *Slither* "has legs" — which is a claim very few snakes can make.

RAMblings

Continued from page 67

should have taken the stairs, remained on the first floor, or some other snide remark. You're anxious to get back into the game and are made to wait; there should have been some kind of cutoff device to get back to the towering skyscraper.

At least your fate is sealed only if you fall from under twenty stories. If you're higher than that, you are permitted to grab a ledge as you plummet.

Another nice touch is a picture of the building on the left side of the screen, with an accompanying arrow which shows you how miserable your progress has been.

— Martin Levitan

golden pons

Test your videogaming knowledge.

1. Can you get from *Othello* to *UFO* using three other titles, no more, no less, selecting home videogames which begin with the last letter of the game before it? For example, you *could* go from *Othello* to *Out of This World* — but is that the route which will give you *UFO* three steps later? (Note: titles may be used only *once*. Computer games are not a part of this challenge nor, due to their scarcity, are Astrocade and Channel F titles included in this or any of the puzzlers. *All* other home videogames presently on the market may be used.)

2. Below are the names of planets, stars, lost cities, bizarre creatures etc. Match these with the home videogames whence they come.

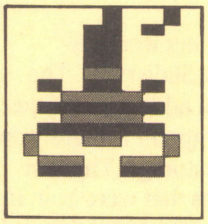
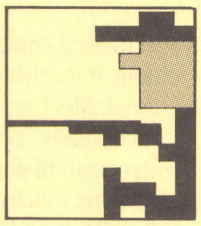
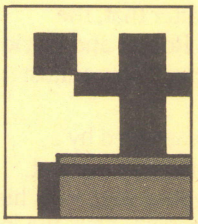
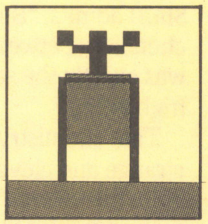
Krybor	*Space Hawk*
Alpha Ro	*Adventure*
Spectra	*Missile Command*
Dratapillars	*Demon Attack*
Electrosauri	*Planet Patrol*
Recognizers	*K.C.'s Krazy Chase*
Enarc	*Tron*
Zardon	*Cosmic Ark*
Grundle	*Space Cavern*
Bonker	*Defender*
Baiters	*Word Zapper*
Rainbow Bubble	*Pitfall*

3. Provide the complete one-word names of the following home videogames by filling in the blanks:

___ z _ r _
__ n __ a _
_ u __ a _
_ r ___ a _
_ t __ i _
_ a __ o _
_ i _ f ___
_ e __ u __
_ o _ i _

4. Find the home videogame titles hidden *phonetically* in the following sentences: "Forget the Rebels, I'm looking for space in Vader's army." "What's the delay, sir? Blast them!" "He put his axe on the shelf, I think."

5. Identify these two home videogames — the first Atari, the second Activision — based on just a portion of their screens.

Answers from last issue:

1. The first letters of *Adventure, Tennis, Air-Sea Battle, Racquetball,* and *Ice Hockey* create the acronym "ATARI."
2. In the list of games, *Indy 500, Starship, Surround, Space Fortress, Tennis, Alien Invaders-Plus, Star Raiders,* if you do away with the commas and run all the words together, the message which emerges is: "In the five hundred starships around Space Fortress Ten is alien invaders plus star raiders."
3. There are three home videogames which contain cardinal numbers in their titles. They are: *Indy 500, 3-D Tic-Tac-Toe, Showdown in 2100 A.D.*
4. Dropping one letter from *Turbo* ('T'), adding 'c' and 's,' and rearranging the letters gives you *Subroc.*
5. The portion of the picture is of the figure standing after a successful landing in Atari's *Human Cannonball.*

facetiae

The column which dares you to identify eight popular home videogames based on the following verse.

I
Eat the dots, no novelty
As through a maze you rush.
The difference here, post-victory,
Is in the scrubbing brush.

II
Runs and blocks and throwing ob-
Jects make a football star.
Not this time! For what you lob
Will kill, or doors will bar.

III
Hop and duck is what you do
While on pastoral tours.
If good fortune is with you
The lady will be yours.

IV
Helped by things on thread, on feet,
Your foe procedes to slink
Through darkened regions not-so-sweet
As you destroy each link.

V
Speaking of a crawling chap,
This one is tough to pin
As it wriggles through the map
With twin costars which you must spin.

VI
Slipping through the tow'ring trees
Is but one challenge, friend,
As racing through the fickle breeze
You try to reach the end.

VII
Lots of water in this game,
Impeding victory.
Every level is the same:
Jump, run, and grab the key.

VIII
"Pieces" are a part of this one
As through screens you roam.
Just make sure you do not miss one
Or you won't make it home.

Answers: I Jawbreaker; II Tron; III Smurfs; IV Centipede; V K.C.'s Crazy Chase; VI Sky Jinks; VII Airlock and VIII E.T.

championship videogaming

A Column of Tips and Trivia From Our Readers

To the Editor:

You did a good job covering *Donkey Kong* in your second issue, but I have some patterns you might like to suggest to your readers.

1. Run to the first ladder as fast as you can, climb it and run to the next one.

2. As soon as you climb the ladder, jump the oncoming barrel. Climb to the next ladder, then run to your left and climb up the last ladder.

3. Jump and get the hammer, running to the right and hitting all oncoming barrels. Position yourself beneath the ledge and hit the barrels raining down.

4. When your hammer disappears, climb the ladder and jump the last of the barrels, climb the next ladder, and get your girlfriend.

My high score on *Donkey Kong* is 95,800.

Greg DeFilippis
No address

To the Editor:

I read your article on *The Incredible Wizard* in issue #3, and your tips work just fine. However, here are a few extra tips on shooting.

After plugging a Worluk, head for the bottom right corner, over player two's home square. Face up and use rapid-fire, since he always enters the screen from above.

Michael Handy
Middletown, OH

To the Editor:

I would like to add to your comments on *The Incredible Wizard.*

A Worluk's exit can be delayed by either Worrior simply by walking through the tunnel. Once the tunnel closes, Worluk will quake with indecision for about three seconds. That's enough time to blast the creature to smithereens.

Also, the Wizard does not escape through the tunnel. He will appear and disappear until he kills one or both Worriors, or is killed.

For the record, the Wizard never appears in the first maze. Just thought you'd like to know.

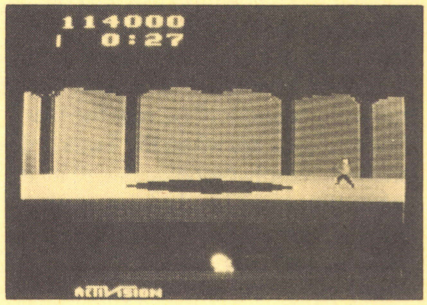
Alfonzo Smith
Cleveland, OH

Finally, we goofed — and countless readers wrote to tell us about it.

Scott Persinger, Ross Kingsley, Mark Eaton, T. Hattabaugh, Greg Miller, Sam Ferrer, and everyone else who was kind and/or miffed enough to write: here's the story behind the Pitfall *pitfall.*

Author Sam Lawrence received the cartridge from Activision two months before it was available to the public. The instructions had not yet been printed, and we gave Sam, flying-blind, a bone-crushing deadline in which to learn and master the game.

We've since hired some help for Sam, but to set the record straight on Pitfall, *we turn the rostrum over to one of our more industrious readers.*



To the Editor:

The enclosed photo is to establish my credibility to comment on Conquering: *Pitfall.* You gave some excellent tips on the art of jumping various hazards to which I would like to add this point. When making successive jumps or jumping immediately after dropping off a vine or hopping out of a hole/ladder, don't touch the button until Harry's feet touch the ground. If the button is depressed too soon, he will not jump at all and you will hit the hazard. This will help considerably in running jumps over three rolling logs.

Most of the strategies in the article, however, are aimed at playing it safe and not losing a life or points. While good advice for the beginner, using these methods will never get you all the treasures.

You stated that going to the left "is cheating." Yet, this is in direct contradiction to what the game's designer, David Crane, recommends in the instruction book. As an expert at this game, I *also* recommend running left until you are able to collect all the treasures. Mastering this, start playing the right and you will find new and fascinating challenges. It's a built-in sequel to the other game!

When you recommended staying above ground, you neglect to mention that it's impossible to collect all the treasures without going underground. You would run out of time long before you could run up a high score. The biggest challenge in this game is discovering the correct route above and below ground that will enable you to collect all the treasures before time runs out.

Contrary to what's stated in the article, you do not automatically lose 100 points for descending underground. You lose no points if you *climb* down the ladder. There are three methods:

1. Run toward the ladder and when Harry's foot touches the edge of the hole, move the joystick back. Harry will descend. When his foot touches the ground, resume left or right direction with the joystick.

2. As Harry approaches the ladder, move the joystick to the diagonal and hold it there until he moves off at the bottom, assuming you are continuing in the same direction.

3. Jump into the hole on top of the ladder, and while still in the air move the joystick back; hold it there until he reaches the bottom of the ladder.

I prefer the third method, as it is easier to jump toward a rolling log and enter the ladder at the same time. You can practice these on the first screen of the game and decide which you like best.

To give you a good start on the game, begin by descending the ladder in front of you and running left. Jump one Scorpion, then climb the ladder and run right, jumping over the Cobra. Descend the ladder on the next screen. Run left again, jump the Scorpion, climb upstairs, and continue left until you collect two treasures. Your score will be eight thousand-plus. Descend the third ladder you come to.

Your next short-cut occurs after your score exceeds twenty-eight thousand, though you'll have to figure out which ladder to descend. If you go down the *wrong* one, you will have

sixteen scorpions to pass while traversing fifty-one aboveground screens and bypassing eight treasures worth twenty-seven thousand points. Two of the later shortcuts require you to go back three screens to the right to pick up treasures; fortunately, you can see the treasure as you jump the last Scorpion before the ladder. Another hint is if you pass a Moneybag while jumping the last Scorpion of a shortcut, don't go back for it above ground unless you have at least 8 minutes remaining or you will miss out on higher point treasures later.

I have record scores in only one other videogame, Activision's *Starmaster.* In fact, I was the only person to report to the company about the scoring anomaly in game four. When you save all four starbases, instead of scoring 9793 the screen reads 0093. The player gets a 00-type score regardless of how many times he or she has docked.

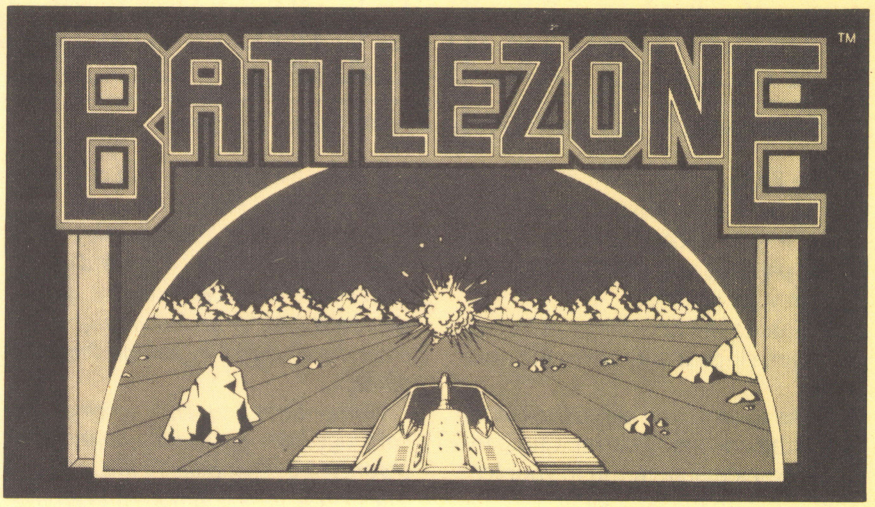
My high scores on record at Activision for the other *Starmaster* games are:

Game 1: 3969
Game 2: 5935
Game 3: 7919

Frank Walters
Panama City, FL

Our sincere thanks to Mr. Walters for his thorough analysis of Pitfall. *We marvel at his skills against the marsh-dwellers, and wonder if he hasn't been slipping away to swampy Okefenokee for some on-the-spot research. . . .*

Speaking of Pitfall, *in case you weren't among the chosen ten thousand or so who received a "Season's Greetings" card from Activision, we thought you'd enjoy a peek at the Harryesque card they sent, commemorating their current top-selling game. Anyway, we've made arrangements to get new videogame cartridges even further ahead of release, in circuit form, so that our strategists will have time to learn them not only inside-out, but over and underground as well.*



Do videogames cause aggression, or do they neutralize it by channeling such tendencies from the battlefield to a less destructive medium? To quote Dr. Joyce Brothers from our first issue, "I'd rather see (people) aggressive without mercy in a game than beating up on one another."

To the Editor:

With all the talk of secret messages hidden in videogames (such as the designer's initials in *Adventure*), I'd like to tell you of a few that I have found.

In *Yar's Revenge,* it isn't necessary to move back-and-forth across the black line that appears when the Swirl is destroyed. Simply demolecularize it and, while the colors are flashing, push the game select switch. The HSWWSH immediately appears.

In Atari's 2600 *Missile Command,* play game variation thirteen as follows:

1. Waste your bullets. This means just that: don't shoot a single thing. Let the invaders get off-screen as fast as possible.

2. When all the cities are destroyed, and all the bullets are gone, in place of the city on the right will appear the initials RF.

In Atari's 2600 version of *Defender,* catch a Humanoid at the exact point where the city and sky meet. When a Baiter comes by, the initials RF will replace the oval shape.

I must warn you that catching the Humanoid at the exact place I've indicated is not easy. But then, rewards such as this *should* be hard.

Chad Van Wagner
Powell, OH

For your information, Chad, wood and steel are "hard," tasks are difficult.

But then, if you spend all of your time catching endangered humanoids where the city and sky meet, you can hardly be expected to know everything.

To the Editor:

I've got a tip for every videogame player who will be over the age of eighteen in 1984.

Vote for any candidate who promises to boot Surgeon General C. Everett Koop out of office. In case you missed his speech in Pittsburgh, PA late last year, he said that videogames produce "aberrations in childhood behavior. Everything is eliminate, kill, destroy."

Apart from being a totally erroneous, unfounded comment, I'd love to hear how he explains the fact that the administration of which he is a part is the most militant and apparently trigger-happy in recent memory. He and his pals didn't even *have* videogames when they were kids.

Maybe comic books did it. Or those horrible, awful, aggressive radio programs like *The Lone Ranger* and *Superman.*

Let's get rid of those bananas, and soon. Non-aggressively, of course: with votes.

M. Nichols
Fairfield, CT

We decided to run (Mr./Ms.?) Nichols' letter in the column to which it was addressed, despite its obvious "uniqueness."

Without dipping in partisan matters, this magazine deplores the ill-advised remarks of the Surgeon General and, by way of a copy of this text to his office, invite Mr. Koop to debate a representative of our staff for publication in a future issue.

You will be kept apprised.

To the Editor:

While playing *Donkey Kong* on ColecoVision, I came across a fly in the soup, as it were.

If you get right under the hat on the bottom floor of the rivet board, and jump, the hat will disappear and the player will be awarded three hundred points.

I don't know if Coleco intentionally added this little *bonbon* to their cartridge, or if it was a mistake, but I thought it would be an interesting tidbit to pass along to other ColecoVision owners.

Greg Maye
Daniels, WV

Ambitious readers are now invited to mail in their opinions as to whether Mr. Maye's three food references were a) coincidental, b) intentional, c) attributable to the fact that he was eating while playing.

To the Editor:

That was a wonderfully complete piece you ran on conquering *Dig-Dug* in your February issue.

The only pointers I have to add are that the vegetables always appear in the tunnel at the same spot from which Dig-Dug started the adventure, and only stay on the screen each round for ten seconds.

In other words, you've got to get over there *fast* to get the veggie.

Jason Cohen
Minneapolis, MN

Reporter-at-large Wayne Teres made the rounds of arcades in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and collected the following strategy tips from videogamers who were racking up staggering scores on a variety of games.

"In the first board of *Jungle King*, you can save time by hitting the button very fast and moving across three vines in succession."

— Mike DeMild

"The last monster in *Dig-Dug* will always leave from the left. Try to maneuver toward this point on each board, which will give you an opportunity to kill the creature."

— Bill Nagy

"To achieve a superjump in *Donkey Kong Jr.*, you have to tap the button quickly and lightly when leaping."

— Ken Lewis

TRON

Continued from page 33

A Recognizer will come to shut the jammed doors using its black beam. However, this will *only* occur between waves in the event that you've set up a warp situation.

If there are several doors jammed at a right angle, or across the grid but not directly opposite one another, the Recognizer will not appear.

Thus, you can literally rack up the points simply by leaving one Warrior alive, while regaining any lost lives through a warp.

When a new Warrior emerges to replace a derezzed one, knock off one of the two and let the other live.

The advantages are more than just being able to reinstate lost lives (which are not cumulative; you can't carry extra lives into another wave).

Standing in front of a jammed door, you can flip your Disc at a Warrior on the other side of the screen, enter the portal, and emerge on the far side to catch the Disc. This doubles your effective firing time, since there's no waiting for the Disc to bounce back, which all do once they're thrown.

Don't forget, however: new Warriors can still emerge from jammed doors. See tip number five below for the dangers which can result from this.

Discs cannot go through the portals. You can avoid a Disc by ducking through a warp, but by the same token you can't send Tron's Disc into a door and expect it to soar out the other side.

Speaking of which, both the Tron's Disc and those of the Warriors are harmless on their return passage. The uselessness of the Disc is clearly shown by it being thicker than when it was thrown. While we're on the subject of Discs, don't lose sight of the fact that a Disc thrown by a Warrior whom you have just derezzed can still kill you. Don't loiter to admire your handiwork.

Obviously, you don't want to "freeze" the game in this manner too early. You'll only be earning fifty or one hundred points a Warrior. But opening a warp from side to side — top/bottom *and* left/right if possible — is imperative if you are to survive later rounds.

Using Tron's Disc in the blocking mode is not something with which you should bother in the early going — that is, under ten thousand points.

DO IT, THEN FLAUNT IT!

You've been meaning to quit smoking for years now. You're tired of the stink, the breathlessness, the expense, the danger ... and the nagging of your loves ones.

So do it! We know it's not easy, but one thing we do know: you can't *maybe* quit or *try* to quit ... you quit. You do it.

And after you've done it, flaunt it with this colorful 50% cotton T-shirt. Cover your lungs in glory!

Please specify Small, Medium, or Large. For each T-shirt send 5.75 plus .75 postage and handling (6.50 Total) to:
I STOPPED SMOKING CLUB
225 NO. MICHIGAN AVE.
NO. MASSAPEQUA, NEW YORK
11758

The *exception* is if you're boxed into a corner. If the three Warriors descend on you, block their Discs until the assault is over. They won't hover once they've tossed their weapons, but will set off to meet them on the rebound. Each soldier will track you anew the instant the Disc is back in-hand — by which time, hopefully, you'll have moved from the corner.

Remember, using the Disc as a shield precludes you from using it as a weapon. You'll score points, but you won't be able to keep the Warrior population down or door-jamming operation in business.

The blocking mode is really useful when you get into the ten thousand point range, when the Leaders begin dogging you. All of the Warriors on the field are more alert because the boss is in town, and you'll be playing more defensively — if not now, then certainly after fifteen thousand points when the Bulldogs arrive and, in the twenty and thirty thousand range by which time the entire team has sped up considerably.

The best tactic in these later stages is to jump back and forth between warp portals, sticking close to each and simply waiting for a clear shot. This will confuse the Warriors, as they'll chase where you were a moment ago — while you've already warped across the grid.

If you *haven't* got warp capacity, you may have to go to the corners just to guard your flanks against the powerful Leaders. With two sides protected, you can deal with the accurate Warriors on the other two fronts. Break one, two, or three Discs ... then get out and, without fear of attack, cause some havoc of your own.

During combat against Warriors, here are some tips to remember:

1. Always try to shoot a Warrior when it is standing in front of a door *or* in front of another Warrior — or both. Your Disc will derezz or jam whatever is in its path — as long as it's heading *from* and not *to* Tron.

2. Work to pin a Discless Warrior in the corner. There is no escape, since they can't warp.

3. Long throws are dangerous. You may get the Warrior, but in the meantime the others will come at Tron and he'll be defenseless. Chance long tosses *only* when you've a nearby warp to regain lives or are going to catch the Disc at the other end of a warp.

4. Go to a warp door when you're down one life — or, if you haven't connected a warp, drop all else to do so. Otherwise, you can be boxed into a corner and lose two more lives before you know it.

5. If you're down two lives and there are only one or two Warriors on the grid, always toss your Disc into a portal as you're warping (entering *or* leaving) or are in the process of jamming it with Tron's body. A new Warrior may enter the grid while you're leaving and derezz you.

6. At the end of every wave, move to the center of the grid. Don't anticipate an attack from any side: wait until it comes, run the other way to give yourself some breathing space, take stock of which Warrior is where and in relation to what door, then launch your attack.

"This is more than just another shoot-'em' up, it's a superior strategy game. The sound effects are superb, though the graphics sparse."

7. Don't be afraid to *cancel* a throw, which you can do by pressing any fire button. This capacity shouldn't lull you into taking unnecessary risks — such as long throws — because it's still a time-waster. But it's nice to know it's there.

Recognizers

The recognizers are at once simpler and more difficult to fight.

They're simpler because they always do the same thing, chugging onto the grid like a steamboat to the center of the screen. They're more difficult because only their small eye is vulnerable, and *that* only when it blinks white.

Realistically, you can expect to get off two shots before the Paralyzer Probe crawls out and freezes you and your Disc on the grid.

Because the grid is longer than it is tall, you stand your best chance planting the Disc in the eye from the side. Here's the rule of thumb for scoring a hit. If the Recognizer *descends* — it will drop from directly above or from the upper left — slide Tron into the third square from the bottom, second row from the right. There, align the top of his head with the bottom of the notch on the square's right-hand side.

If the Recognizer *rises* — which it will do from the lower right — position Tron in the center of the third square from the bottom, second row from the left. Have him standing so that his feet are touching the baseline of the square toward the center.

Both positions will give you two chances to shoot dead left or right: one shot to make sure there's no need for a minor adjustment, the other to put out the eye.

After you launch the second shot, don't bother waiting for the Disc to return. The Paralyzer Probe will be on your tail by then. As soon as you've thrown the Disc, run to the top of the screen to allow yourself a final shot straight *down* on the eye of the Recognizer. The sides and top are the only routes into the eye.

Make your first shot the instant the Recognizer comes to a halt, while it's eye is still orange. If you fire when the eye goes white, it will have changed to orange again before your Disc strikes home.

If you destroy a Recognizer, the doors you have jammed will stay jammed. That will save you the trouble of having to start that exhausting procedure from scratch.

Needless to say, the instant you've completed a wave and there's a warp open, get into the center of the grid *fast*. It wouldn't do for you to be standing under the Recognizer when it appears: if it touches you, just brushes you once, the game ends.

Comment

Tron: Deadly Discs is nothing like the arcade *Tron* game, but it's *very* much like the Disc sequence in the film.

Though the game might have been a little more exciting with different screens or a scrolling grid, that's asking a lot. This is more than just another shoot-'em' up, it's a superior strategy game. The sound effects are superb, and if the graphics are sparse that's a virtue of having put so much of the console's abilities into gameplay.

The Warriors and Tron are every bit as articulated as the figures in Intellivision's football and baseball games, which is to say you won't find more realistic figures in home videogaming.

In short, *Tron: Deadly Discs* may be short on atmosphere but it is a magnificent game for children and adults.

eye on

Continued from page 10
with this expanded version of the game. Like the first game, based on the plot of the film, E.T. must get home before his/her/its energy runs out.

Kangaroo and *Jungle Hunt* join the 5200 family this month and, like *Qix*, are breathtaking adaptations of the arcade attractions. So much for the oft-heard cry, "You can't get arcade quality games at home."

JUNE:

Dig-Dug is the sole offering this month, and it's a great one. All of which goes to show that while Atari may have suffered some sales dips late in 1982, they are going to be formidable adversaries *this* year.

THE TRON FLAP

You'll be reading a lot on *Tron* this issue — for instance, all about the new home videogame from Intellivision and the extraordinary videocassette from Walt Disney Home Video.

Here's something you *won't* be reading in this issue: the story of the sequel to *Tron*.

Several weeks ago, a slim, illustrated manuscript arrived in our offices. It was a novel entitled *Warrior Tron*, and it was bylined Steven Lisberger — who directed the motion picture.

The covering letter from Lisberger said that we could publish this adventure in our new fiction section, so we eagerly read the manuscript.

It was a damn good job.

Seems that everything's running smoothly in the liberated world of the computer until Alan Bradley leaves his keyboard to go get some more popcorn. The cagey MCP uses that

brief moment to confuse the Tron program and take over the computer world once again.

The battle begins anew, with Sark revitalized, Tron trying to destroy him, and no resolution by novel's end. However, Tron has metamorphosed into Tron Invictus, sort of an MCP counterpart within the system, vying for control from a new and more awesome powerbase than before.

The minute we put down the neatly typed manuscript we called Lisberger to thank him for the story and to advise him we'd be running it in this issue. P.S.: Lisberger didn't write it.

Who did?

No one knows.

Whoever the author was had access to the closed files on the film, since the manuscript was illustrated with never-before-published production drawings of scenes cut from the first *Tron*, such as the inside of Yori's elegant apartment.

We may never know who wrote *Warrior Tron;* if he or she comes forth, the Disney legal department stands poised to throw the disk at them.

Well, it was fun while it lasted.

A BIGGER LEGAL BATTLE

The *Tron* row was small potatoes compared to what's brewing between MGM and 20th Century-Fox regarding the film version of a novel we reviewed in our last issue, Arthur C. Clarke's *2010: Odyssey Two*.

Clarke has sold the movie rights to the computer-heavy tale to Fox. However, it seems as though MGM, the producers of the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* have a lock on all sequels to the film.

Fox disagrees, and at this point only one thing's for certain: both studios will probably spend the equivalent of the proposed film's budget slugging this out in the courts.

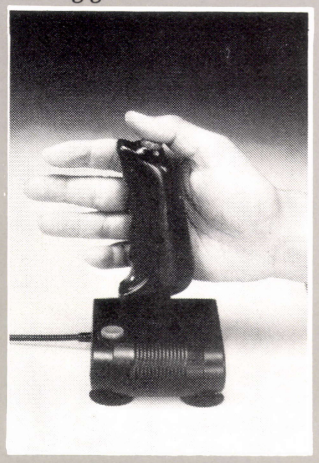
Regardless of who ends up with the project, Clarke and the director of the original film, Stanely Kubrick, has already met about working together on the movie sequel.

After creating such box office flops as *Barry Lyndon* and *The Shining*, Kubrick could use a hit. *2010* seems to be a natural — although, considering how much time Kubrick spends on movies, it may be 2010 before we see it.

FINALLY, SOMETHING LEGAL

The staff of *Videogaming Illustrated* is flattered that *Odyssey Adventure* Magazine saw fit to devote an entire page to reprinting our strategies on *Pick Axe Pete*.

We mention this not only to formally thank *Odyssey Adventure*, but to alert readers who own Odyssey units that if you missed our scarce second issue (our extremely limited supply of back issues is going fast, even at $12.50), you can still read up on what we had to say about this great mining game.



OUR MISTAKE

Odyssey Adventure may have included us in *their* magazine, but we managed to overlook someone in ours.

In our extensive joystick review last issue, we were unable to test and include Spectravideo's new Quick Shot joystick in time.

Hence, this mini-report: it's a good, solid single-hand unit with a very useful suction cup attachment to hold it firmly in place.

Spectravideo also manufactures Spectravision videogames which, alas, are not tough enough to *require* a sturdier joystick. Try it on *Ms. Pac-Man* instead.

eye on

ALSO, SOMETHING CHEAP!

It's rare, these days, when a bargain arrives in your mailbox along with the bills. But that's what many of you will be getting: a chance to buy videogames at a considerably reduced cost.

This is made possible thanks to a new club created by Time-Life Books. The club is called GameStars, and it offers a library of all the old, new, and upcoming Activision 2600-compatible cartridges under the following terms: you get two videogames for $29.95, as long as you agree to purchase another four cartridges during the year, at approximately ten to fifteen percent off retail price.

The club mails a GameStars *Bulletin* every six weeks, describing a Featured Selection (a game not yet on the market) as well as several alternate selections.

Information can be had by writing to GameStars at Time & Life Building, Chicago, IL, 60611.

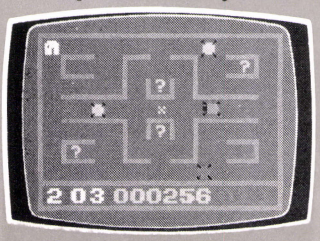
BEEBOT-SHOO-OP

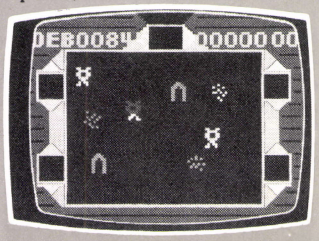
Come April, you may be able to use the Time-Life service to receive killer bees by mail. *Killer Bees* that is — a new space game from Odyssey.

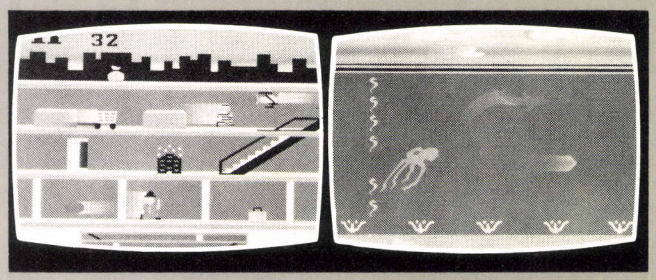
Earth is being invaded by Beebots, pods which release swarms of lethal bees. The player controls a hive of bees to defend earth against the swarm.

As the game progresses, the beebots accelerate and develop an immunity to the player's bees; thus, the player must resort to the dreaded Rasha Ray. It's kill or bee killed, all the way.

Odyssey has also adapted the arcade game *Turtles* with full sync-sound and speech if it's played through the Voice. *Turtles* is a maze game in which you search for errant baby turtles and bring them back home, dodging monstrous beetles which you shell, so to speak, with bombs.







RAIDING THE BARNYARD

With bees, bugs and turtles afoot, can pigs be far behind? Activision has announced a trio of new games, including *Oink!*, for release in the coming months.

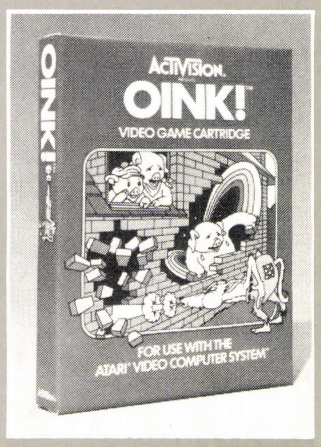
All three new games are Atari-compatible.

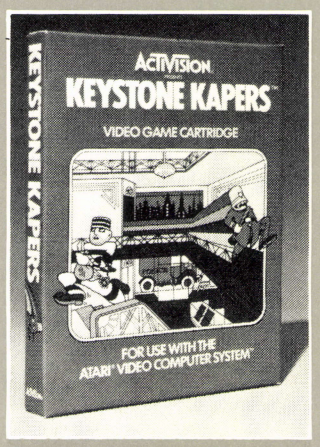
Oink! is a one or two-player game based on the fable of the Three Little Pigs. As a pig, you desperately rush to replace the straw, wood or bricks that are falling due to the Big Bad Wolf's huffing and puffing. If the Wolf should break through and pull your pig out, your pig runs squealing off screen and the Wolf reportedly cries "Na-na-na-na-na."

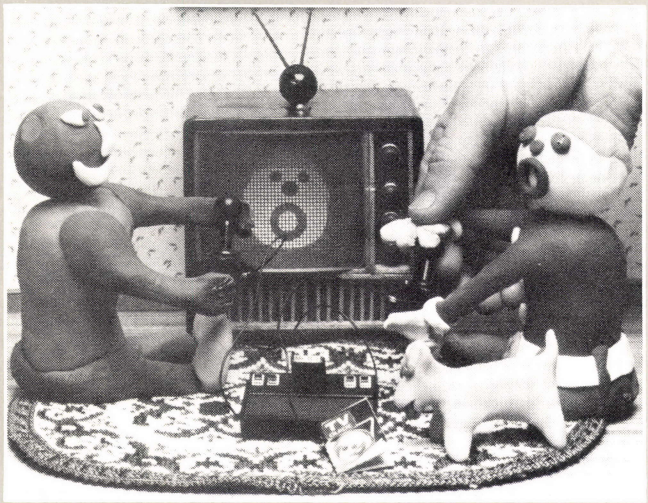
Playing *Dolphin*, your ears are more important than your eyes. Your dolphin is being chased by a squid through seas thick with seahorses. The gaps in the seahorse herds must be traversed, underwater currents used to help your progress and hinder that of the squid. Meanwhile, gulls must be snatched in mid-air.

The catch: obstacles and prizes come too fast for the player to react merely visually. Like real dolphins, you must heed sonar signals that precede the visuals by seconds. By the end of the game, the game is abuzz with "harmonic cacophony" as the fast moving squids, seahorses, gulls, and waves give off their unique signals.

In *Keystone Capers*, a one-player game, Keystone Kelly chases Harry Hooligan through a department store with radios, toy planes, balls, and shopping carts as obstacles. A long-range scanner at the bottom of the screen provides strategy pertaining to elevators and escalators, allowing the player to keep track of prey if the two happen to be on separate floors of the department store. The player picks up points by dodging obstacles, and wins the game by catching Hooligan before he escapes.







OH, OH, N-NOOO

Designing a game in which the cop chases the bandit is a natural, but what do you do with Mr. Bill, the hapless clay doll from TV's *Saturday Night Live?*

Designer Walter Williams, who originally created the character, must have been sorely tempted to arrange the game so that the player punishes Mr. Bill for points.

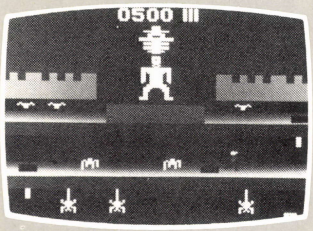
But that is not the way Data Age chose to go. "For seven years Mr. Bill's audience watched him get stepped on, sat upon, pulled apart and crushed in every way possible," says Data Age's Product Development Manager J. Ray Dettling. "Now, Mr. Bill's fans can look after him and keep him away from Sluggo."

Mr. Bill's Neighborhood is compatible with the 2600. The player helps Mr. Bill gather his mother, his dog Spot, and his girlfriend Sally and flee his neighborhood, with its dead-end alleys and speeding traffic, before Mr. Hands or Sluggo can make a clay pigeon out of him.

A "Save Mr. Bill" media campaign will be launched to coincide with the release of the game in April.

Also from Data Age *Frankenstein's Monster,* to be released in March.

In *Frankenstein's Monster,* the player must dodge vampire bats, spiders, and fireballs while gathering stones from a dark, dreary castle and heaping them around the monster. If the creature can accumulate enough energy and come to life, the player is monster-mashed.



Mary Shelley never imagined that her infamous creation, Frankenstein's monster, would go from printed page to movie screen to videogame.

A GAME TO SINK YOUR TEETH INTO

The Frankenstein monster was a natural for companies seeking high-recognizability in the ever-spiraling competition of the video games market. The same could be said for his bloodbrother, Dracula.

So recognizable is Dracula that not one but *two* companies, Coleco and Imagic, will be releasing different *Dracula* games next month.

In the ColecoVision version, the player drives a vampire-hunting Van Helsing figure, armed with cross, garlic, and stake and hammer. Your job is to protect a bed-ridden lovely from the Count's advances.

Imagic's game for Intellivision is quite different. The *player* is Dracula; rising from the grave and taking the form of either bat or man, you must find as many victims as possible and return to the coffin before sunrise. He is pursued, all the while, by white wolves, vultures, and a stake-throwing constable.

Also slated for current or near-future release from Imagic for Mattel's Intellivision:

Ice Trek: a Nordic adventurer must cross a frozen tundra to confront and destroy the Frost Giant's fortress with fireballs. The player skiis around a stampeding herd of caribou, escapes the wrath of the Goddess of the Wilderness, and bridges a lake by hopping ice floes — just for starters.

Swords & Serpents: in a series of mazes, a wizard and a knight team up to battle a dragon which guards a rich treasure.

Tropical Troubles: the hero and his lady have been shipwrecked on a tropical isle. When a beast steals away the lady, the hero must save her, following a trail of hankies and braving flying boulders and coconuts, human-eating clams, malevolent scrub, and hot lava.

White Water: the player battles savage natives, whirlpools and boulders in search of treasure down a fast-flowing river.

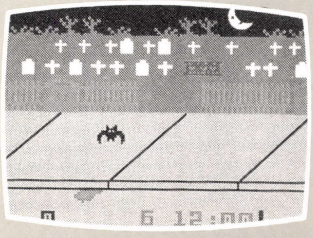
Safecracker: 3-D graphics enhance this game as the player is a burglar cruising in a Model-T for a bank to burgle. If the combination is determined and the safe successfully cracked, there is still a high-speed chase through the streets before the loot can be yours.

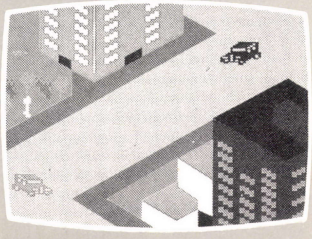
Also from Imagic, for the Atari VCS system:

Shootin' Gallery: for ages five to nine, a colorful carnival shooting gallery.

Escape from Argos: the winged horse Pegasus carries the Greek hero Jason into many adventures, including a confrontation with the hideous Furies.

Sky Patrol: the player is a World War I flying ace in an observation balloon crossing enemy lines. Firepower from below and whimsical winds from above are but a few of the challenges the ace must face.





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VIDEO VERMIN, AND PROUD OF IT

Owners of Atari and Intellivision have enough games to keep them happy from now until doomsday, but the owners of the Commodore Vic-20 and Commodore 64 have had lean pickings.

No more. UMI (United Microware Industries) have announced two new games for the Vic-20 and one game for the Commodore 64. Russ Bedford, President of UMI, points out, "Retailers should take note of the fact that this is no longer a specialized market — not with an installed base approaching one million Vic-20 computers worldwide."

For the Vic-20, UMI is presenting *Video Vermin.* Spiders, ants, fleas, beetles, butterflies, and an occasional snail are invading your garden and you must shoot them, ever mindful that each falling body sprouts more vermin.

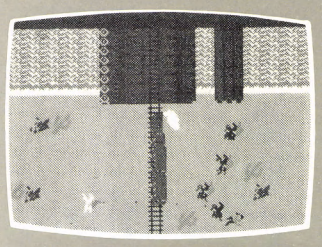
Arachnoid: in this one, the player is the spider protecting its young from scrabbling vermin and buzzing wasps.

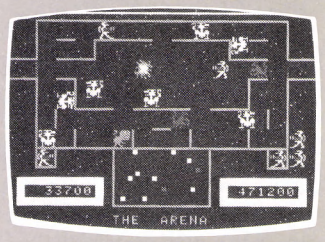
Motor Mania, for the Commodore 64, is a roadway game with a variety of road conditions, speeds, hazards, and repair and refueling logistics with which to deal.

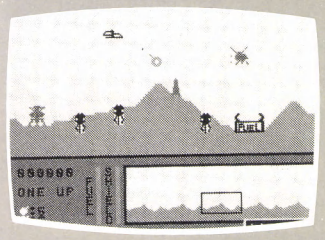
COLECO INVASION

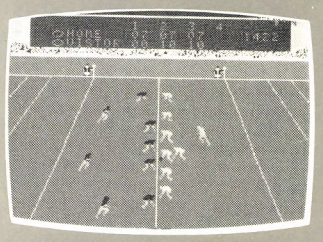
Finally, if one picture is worth a thousand words, what's the value of a whole collection of photos?

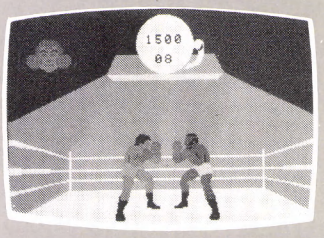
Judge for yourself as we present this breathtaking sampling of screens for some of the games that Coleco will be releasing in 1983 for Coleco-Vision owners — not be mention some of the handy hardware also being released.







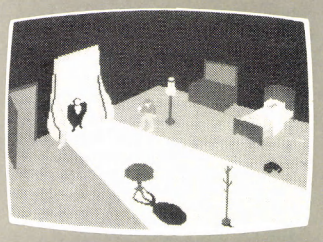


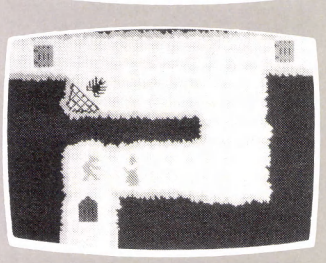


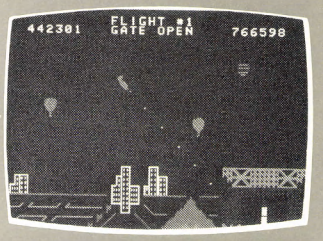
***You'll recognize football, horse racing, and baseball, and should have no trouble finding* Rocky, Smurfette's Birthday, and Donkey Kong, Jr.**

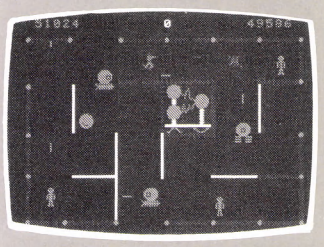
Yes — ColecoVision has *Gorf* for their console, and *Wizard of Wor* as well, which are presently available from CBS.

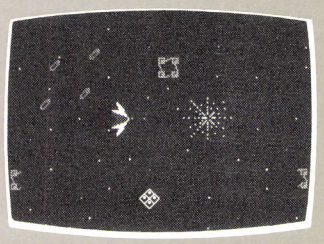
For the more puzzle-oriented among you, find: *Looping, Space Panic, Wild Westerner, Victory, Space Fury, Mr. Do!, Buck Rogers and Frenzy.*

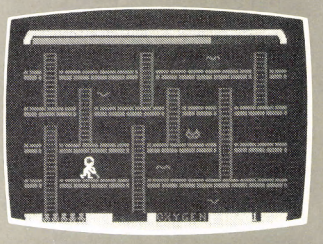


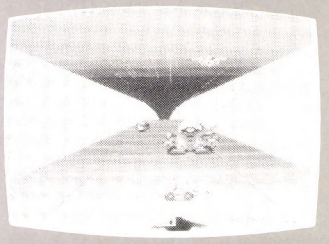


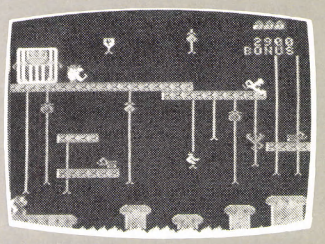


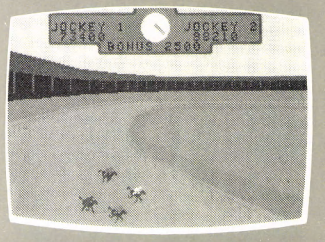


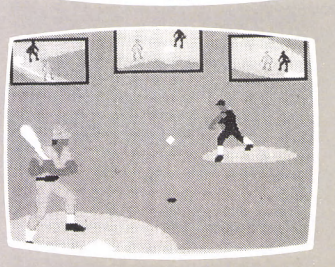


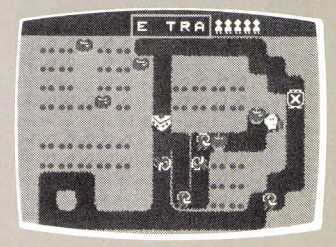


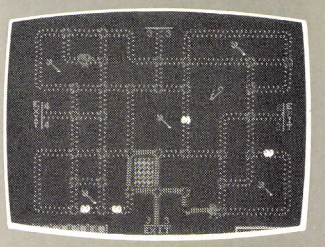


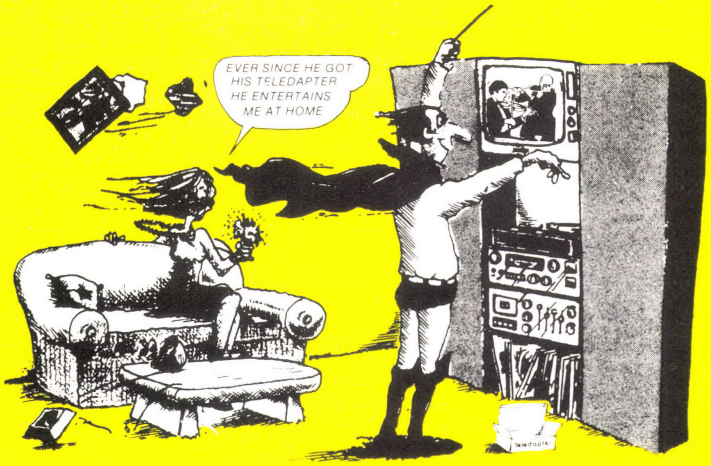












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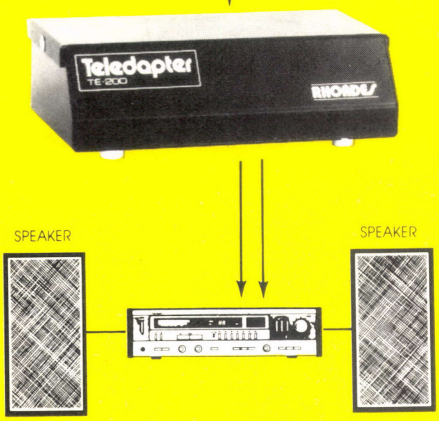

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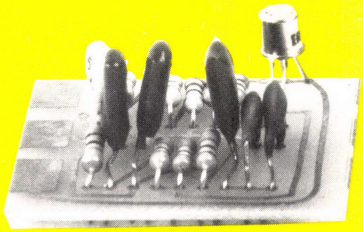

HOW IT CONNECTS

The Teledapter will work with any TV and any stereo system that has auxillary, tuner, or tape inputs. The Teledapter itself should be located near your stereo. A cable supplied with the unit plugs into the input of the Teledapter and goes to the TV or VCR where it is plugged into an earphone jack, an audio output, or can be alligator clipped directly on the TV's speaker terminals. The outputs of the Teledapter (left and right) plug directly into your stereo amp or receiver, with cables also supplied.

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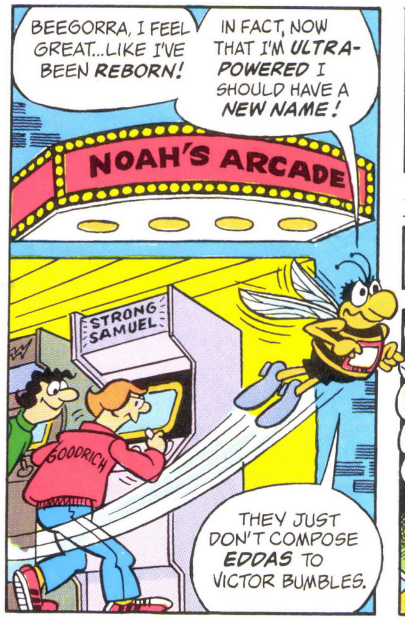
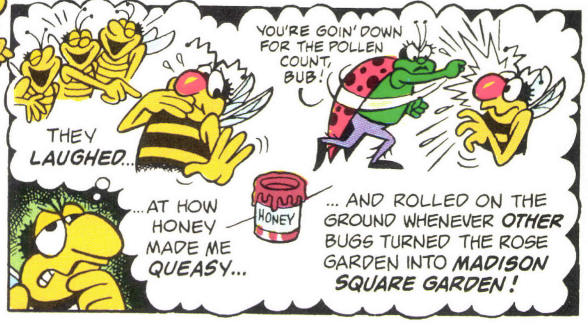
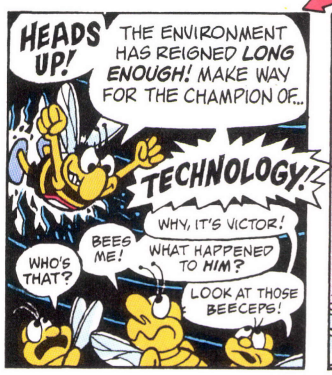
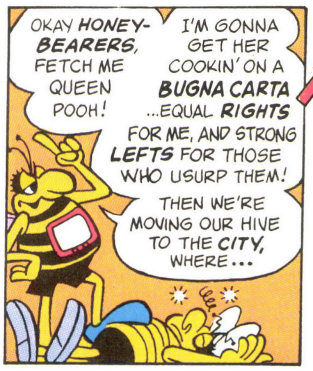
AFTER TANGLING WITH THE CIRCUITRY OF AN ARCADE GAME, VICTOR BUMBLE HAS BECOME VIDEO VICTOR, BEE WITH A MISSION!

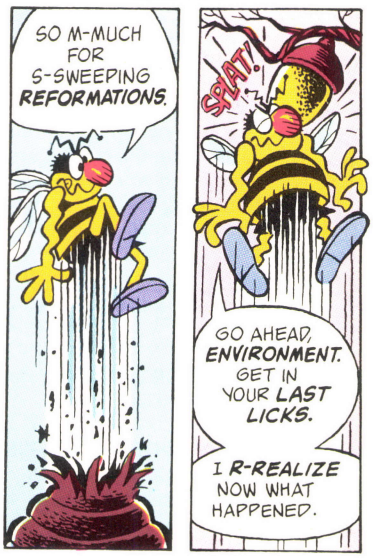


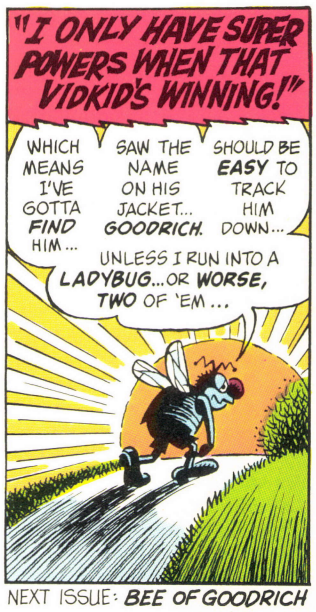






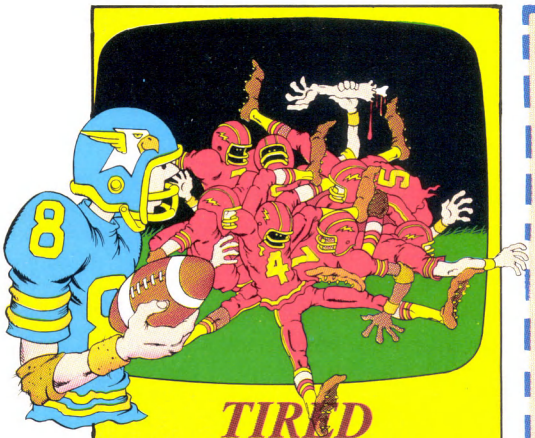
MANY UNCOMFORTABLE MINUTES LATER...





NEXT ISSUE: BEE OF GOODRICH

Script: Jeff Rovin/Art: Gill Fox



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you Read it Here First!

Once again we present our videogames-which-aren't-but-should-be column.

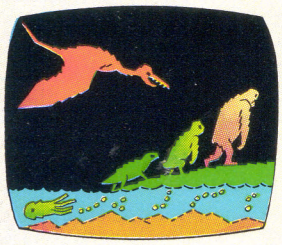
This issue, however, we didn't poll *anyone* as to which of the videogame suggestions they thought were best. We simply concocted a three-cartridge scenario which we felt shows how exciting gameplay might be combined with epic sweep *and* educational value.

And, if we dare get serious for a moment, our fictitious videogames do one thing more.

Without meaning to trivialize the history of our species, we created a set of games which follows humankind from the dawn of life on earth to the foundation of civilization.

We think you'll agree that these adventures bear out an opinion voiced in these pages two issues back by actor Cliff Robertson that "life itself is a videogame . . . we are all kind of maneuvering through pretty narrow straits sometimes."

Evolution



A journey through time and genetics. You have fifteen minutes to evolve into a human being and discover fire.

You begin this game as a single-celled animal in primordial waters. You elude a hydra, swim around choking clouds of algae, and evolve into a fish.

The second screen pits your fish against a sea bottom which is constantly rising and falling and spewing out bubbling mud, creating debilitating pollution, channels, and caverns through which you must negotiate. If you make it to the shore, you evolve into a plant-eating dinosaur.

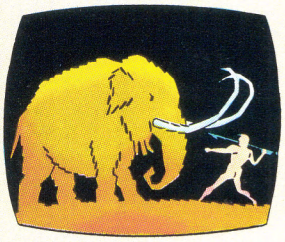
Screen three sends your triceratops against a carnivorous tyrannosaurus; beating the predator, you must rush to find water during a drought, beating other dinosaurs to the ever-shrinking supplies.

Surviving extinction, you evolve into a shrew-like animal who moves quickly . . . but with very tiny steps through a suddenly flowering terrain. You must now avoid the hungry sabre-tooth tigers which hunt you. Your only escape from the cats is to take to the occasional trees which dot the terrain. You can chase them away with tossed sticks — though the longer you stay aloft, the more time you waste.

Finally, the shrew becomes a human. Your task: find fire before you succumb to the Ice Age. Along the way, you must keep from slipping into snowy crevasses and avoid avalanches from the glaciers behind you.

Each new level is accompanied by *Also Sprach Zarathustra* — the theme music from *2001: A Space Odyssey.*

Invention



Okay, so humankind has got fire. We're still naked and helpless.

You are a cave person who has been elected by the tribe to gather mastodon skins for clothing. The more elephants you fell, the more points you score. You've got twenty minutes in which to perform this public service.

A mastodon lumbers by every sixty seconds. It crosses the screen first one way, then another. After that, the ancient elephant is gone. If you slay the animal, its hide is automatically added to your score.

You can stop a mastodon in one of two ways: use branches to make a spear or to camouflage a tar pit. The tar is also a hazard for you, costing one of your three cave people if you tumble in by accident or are chased by a stampede.

Since you need branches, you'll spend a lot of time climbing the screen's one tree for high, thin sticks with which to snare the animal. Obviously, each branch you break off makes the next climb more perilous, since there's one less foothold. Fall from any height and you're dead. Spears can be reused while any one mastodon is on the screen. Once the animal is gone, the spear snaps. Snares cannot be reused.

A difficulty level can send a rival, slightly more advanced cave person, emerging at times from the cave with a bow and arrow. Your only escape is to scurry up the tree until the aggressor leaves.

Agriculture

You've provided clothes, weapons, and fire; the tribe is pretty fond of you. You're elected chief. One problem, though: feeding the clan. The object of this game is to keep the crops growing for the duration of the ten minute game, until they mature and can be harvested. For every crop which survives, you earn points.

You begin the game with three empty fields (three screens) and a bag of seeds for each: corn, wheat, and bananas. The bananas take the longest to grow, the wheat the fastest. Points are awarded accordingly.

Each field will be endangered by its own peculiar menace. Apes scurrying across the treetops try to rob your fruit; hordes of flying insects attack the corn; floods threaten the wheat. The sound of doom reaches your ears from the other screens no matter where you are.

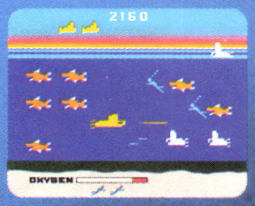
Getting rid of the monkeys is a matter of picking up rocks and tossing them into the trees. Miss, and they go for only a few seconds. Hit one, and you buy more time.

The insects can only be turned away by lighting a bonfire. But it takes *time* to rub those sticks together: stop at any point to address another disaster or plant seeds, and you've got to start all over again. The fire burns out after the horde has fled.

The floods require some quick irrigation, which means taking shovel in-hand and digging around the field. You can stop a ditch at any time and it will not be filled in — unless there's a flood.

Wise cave mayors dig away whenever there's an extra moment.

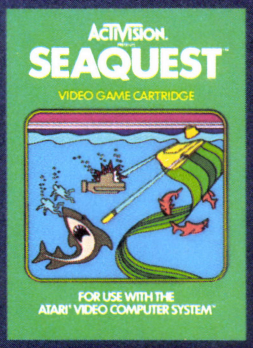
YOU'RE IN DEEP TROUBLE.



We're talking really deep trouble here. You're the captain of a deep-diving submarine, and your scuba divers are being attacked. Schools of great white sharks have a school lunch program in mind, and your divers are the main course. You've got to be fast, or your divers will be fast food.

While you've got your eyes on your divers, modern day bluebeards have their eyes on you. These pirates have subs of their own, but they want yours too. Nobody ever said being a captain was easy.

By the way, you'd better check your air supply. You may have to surface to fill your tanks.



What will your divers do then?

What will the pirates do?

What will you do?

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